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THE ROMANTIC PAST

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BY

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"THE MERRY PAST," "LIGHT COME, LIGHT GO," "LONDON CLUBS," ETC.,

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LONDON

CHAPMAN AND HALL, LTD.

1911

RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,
BRUNSWICK STREET, STAMFORD STREET, S.E.,
AND BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

CONTENTS

I

PAGE

The Dominance of Love the Chief Theme of Legend and Verse —Abélard and Héloïse—The Archduke Rudolph—General Boulanger—The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington —Manuel and Laila—Mowis, the Bridegroom of Snow—Leilah and Mejnoun—The Taj Mahal—Gompatchi and Komurasaki and their Unhappy Fate—Chamfort on Love—Its Conflict with Happiness and Tragic Results—Its Real Character—The Instrument of Nature—Thalestris and Alexander—Frederick William I—Prurient Puritanism—Its Attempt to drive Nelson from the Quarter-deck—Pauline Borghèse and her Amorous Career—The Comtesse Castiglione—Villon and La Belle Heaulmière 1

II

Love in the Middle Ages—John of Lancaster and his French Sweetheart—A Love Story of Old France—The Old Baron, his Daughter, and the Young Knight—An Elopement—Meeting with Ruffians—The Lovers' Fate—Splendid Courtesans—"Mars gave Rome the Empire of the World and Venus Imperia"—Pietro Aretino and this Beautiful Light of Love—Her Power and Riches—Arrival of Imperia at Constance—Adventure with Ecclesiastical Lovers—Given a Palace by the Cardinal of Ragusa—The Death of her Daughter alters her disposition—Despair of Gallants at her Austerity—She falls in Love with a Young French Knight—Her Marriage, Noble Devotion, and Death . 37

III

The Influence of Love in shaping History—Its Connection with Feminine Domination generally Baneful—Woman, "Nature's most charming blunder," and her

PAGE

Ways—Alexander the Great—Francis I—La Belle Féronnière—Henri Quatre and his fifty-six Mistresses—Love at the Court of the Roi Soleil—A Cohort of Women rule France—Anecdotes and Adventures—Marie Antoinette and her Injudicious Behaviour—George III and Hannah Lightfoot — The Lass of Richmond Hill—Maria Walpole and the Duke of Gloucester — Disastrous Effects of Feminine Influence on Ruling Dynasties in Modern Times . . 74

IV

Love the Favourite Pastime of the French Noblesse—Loose Morality under the *Ancien Régime*—Jacques Casanova de Seingalt the Friend of Frederick the Great and Voltaire—His Curious Career and Amours—The Marquis De Sade, a Shakespeare of Erotic Fancy—Scandalous Adventure at his *Petit Maison*—Criminal Escapade at Marseilles—His Devoted Wife—Liberated from the Bastille, becomes Popular with Revolutionary Leaders—Napoleon decrees that he should be incarcerated for an Indefinite Time—Last Days of De Sade at Charenton—His Admiration for Théroigne de Méricourt 104

V

Carrier and his so-called Republican Marriages—His Cruelty and Love of Orgies—Simone Évrard the Mistress of Marat—Charlotte Corday and her Platonic Lover, Adam Lux — Wives of the Terrorists — Fouquier-Tinville, Danton, Billaud-Varenne and others—The Romance of Camille Desmoulins—Curious Marriage of General Dumouriez—His Disillusionment and Harsh Behaviour—Madame Langenois who, as a Dragoon, Side by Side with her Lover charged for France—Other Female Soldiers of the Republic 149

VI

Effect produced on Women by Napoleon—His first Love Affair—Désirée Clary—Meeting with Josephine—Marriage—Her Pet Dog bites his Leg—Josephine reluctantly sets out to join him in Italy—Her Liaison with Lieutenant Charles—Promises to see the Young Officer

PAGE

no more, but renews the Liaison whilst Bonaparte is in Egypt—Again forgiven—Her Life at the Malmaison—Divorce and Death—Hortense Beauharnais and her Love Affair with Count Flahaut—Her Son, the Duc de Morny—Napoleon's Second Marriage to Marie Louise and the Latter's Intrigue with Neipperg—The Duc de Reichstadt—His Alleged Love of Fanny Elsler and end 181

VII

Bonaparte in Egypt—His Cleopatra—Madame Fourès—Her Curious History—Mademoiselle George—The Italian Singer, La Grassini—Her Remark as to Wellington, another of her Lovers—The La Vallière of the Emperor, the beautiful Walewska—How Napoleon won her Love—Her Devotion and Patriotic Zeal—Fidelity to the Emperor after his Fall—Visit to Elba—Marriage and Death—Napoleon at Rousseau's Tomb . . 220

VIII

Instability of the Artistic Temperament—Opinion of Alphonse Daudet—Poets seldom Inspired by their Wives—Byron—His Opinion and Treatment of Women—His Relations with the Countess Guiccioli and Lady Caroline Lamb—Shelley—Burns—Sir Philip Francis and Madame Grand—Subsequent Adventures of this Lady, and her Marriage to Talleyrand—D'Orsay and Lady Blessington—Alexandre Dumas, Balzac and their Mistresses—Conjugal Fidelity of Serjent and Blake . 248

IX

The Loves of two Great Frenchmen—Victor Hugo and Léon Gambetta—The one Fickle, the other True—Extraordinary Relations of Hugo with Juliette Drouet—Noble Self-Abnegation of his Wife—Polygamous Tendencies of the Poet—First Meeting of Gambetta with Léonie Léon—The Dawn of Love—The Park of Versailles—Léonie becomes his Mistress—*Hors cet annel point n'est d'Amour*—Accident to the Great Tribune—His Illness and Death 284

X

PAGE

Aurore Dupin, known as George Sand—Balzac's Description of her — Ancestry — Augustus the Strong—His Son, "Marshal Saxe" and his Daughter Aurore—Her Marriage—Disillusionment and Entry upon a Literary Career—Liaisons with Jules Sandeau and Prosper Mérimée—First Meeting with Alfred de Musset—The Saint Simonians acclaim George Sand as a Female Messiah—Her Just Estimate of their Creed—Voyage with Musset to Venice—The Poet's Illness, and Appearance of Pagallo—Irritation and Departure of Musset—Pagallo's Visit to Paris—Further Intrigues of the Authoress—Liszt and Chopin—Unflattering Opinion of Latter concerning George Sand—More Favourable View taken by Rosa Bonheur—Conclusion . . 317

INDEX 348

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	To face page
NAPOLEON AND HIS SON	*Frontispiece*
PRINCESS PAULINE BORGHÈSE	34
LOUISE DE KEROUALLE	78
KITTY FISHER	108
THE MARQUISE DE SADE	130
MADAME DE ST. AUBIN	274
THE MORNING STARS	282
TOMB OF MARSHAL SAXE	318
MONUMENT TO ALFRED DE MUSSET	344

THE ROMANTIC PAST

I

The Dominance of Love the Chief Theme of Legend and Verse—Abélard and Héloïse—The Archduke Rudolph—General Boulanger—The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington—Manuel and Laila—Mowis, the Bridegroom of Snow—Leila and Mejnoun—The Taj Mahal—Gompatchi and Komurasaki and their Unhappy Fate—Chamfort on Love—Its Conflict with Happiness and Tragic Results—Its real Character—The Instrument of Nature—Thalestris and Alexander—Frederick William I—Prurient Puritanism—Its Attempt to drive Nelson from the Quarter-deck—Pauline Borghèse and her Amorous Career—The Comtesse Castiglione—Villon and La Belle Heaulmière

Of all the passions which have dominated humanity and eternally excited its interest, love alone still asserts that supremacy assumed when the first man folded the first woman in his ardent embrace. Empires have fallen, entire races have disappeared; but the primeval affection of our first parents, which Nature has dignified above all other passions, remains stable in a world of perpetual change.

Venus, the mother and queen of the pagan world, outlives all things sacred or profane, ever presenting a phantasmal semblance of beatitude which the homilies of ecclesiastics and the efforts of moral reformers are quite unable to dispel.

As of old, man continues to be enmeshed in the nets of the temptress scenting prey, and woman to be deceived by man. Unsuccessful lovers languish in agonies of sorrow, whilst successful ones have cause to regret triumphs the rewards of which are too often of but doubtful worth.

Such considerations, however, even when combined with the knowledge that headlong and impetuous passion is inevitably followed by its own atonement, have in all probability never yet calmed the transports of one single real lover, for the insidious whisper of Cupid easily stifles the voice of reason.

Nevertheless, in spite of the numberless tragedies and profound misery which passionate love is prone to produce, and notwithstanding the fact that even sublimated and idealized devotion and sensual ecstasy are often not so very far apart, the strange magnetic attraction which eternally subsists between man and woman has originated some of the most beautiful sentiments of which the human brain is capable. Love, indeed, has ever been the chief theme of all dramatic works, tragic as well as comic, romantic as well as classic, Indian as well as European. Not less is it the material of by far the largest part of lyrical and also of epic poetry; especially if we class with the latter the enormous pile of romances which, for centuries, every year has produced in all

the countries of the world as regularly as the fruits of the earth.

Most of these tales deal with couples battling against difficulties and misfortune; for to the lover of romance the interest cannot be sustained when there are no obstacles to be smoothed away.

After, however, he has closed some book in which a pair of lovers have triumphed over their troubles, he does not for a moment reflect on the disillusionment which in real life is too often their eventual fate; on the contrary, he leaves the victorious couple quite confidently, because he shares with them the illusion that they have founded their own happiness.

Every nation has its love story—the list is endless—who is there that does not know of the immortal lovers, Romeo and Juliet? The misfortunes of Abélard and Héloïse are still remembered after the lapse of centuries—a strangely pathetic tale, in which the enduring passion of an adoring woman was but poorly reciprocated in the final letters of her lover. Abélard indeed, after the outrage he sustained as a consequence of his affection, wrote in a strain of merely affectionate regard which must have come near extinguishing the glowing embers of the unfortunate nun's burning passion.

The tomb of these lovers, in the cemetery of Père

La Chaise, in Paris, is yet sought out by thousands every year and kept bright with flowers, the gift of those who have themselves both loved and suffered. In our own matter-of-fact age Romance flourishes as of yore, and counts its victims amongst every class—one of the greatest tragedies in the annals of love was the mysterious death of the heir to the Imperial Crown of Austria in the hunting-lodge of Meyerling, subsequently by the Emperor's order razed to the ground.

Here twenty-one years ago the Archduke Rudolph and the beautiful girl who could never be his bride sought death in each other's arms. Beyond the fact that their bodies were found side by side covered with flowers, no details have ever become known—the exact truth remaining the secret of but a very few.

In Austria, the only son of the venerable Emperor was beloved. A man of great personal charm, he possessed many qualities which endeared him to the people, and even to-day emotion seizes many who look upon his statue in the Budapest City Park. Half-forgotten memories crowd through their minds, and once more they see the Crown Prince in the full strength of his ardent youth. They recall the festivities which attended his wedding—the strange rumours which

later began to be heard, and finally, his tragic end.

The statue in question, though possessing no great artistic merit, is said to be a good likeness of the ill-fated Archduke.

Garbed in the picturesque shooting-dress of his country he gazes dreamily before him, seeking, as it were, the solution of the eternal enigma of life and death.

Not without pathos also is the last resting-place in the cemetery of Ixelles at Brussels of General Boulanger—the somewhat bombastic French soldier whom the love of woman undoubtedly prevented from becoming dictator of France. Notwithstanding his extravagances, he must be numbered amongst the true lovers of history. A broken-down and beaten man, he was unable to bear the loss of the mistress he adored ; and so, betaking himself to her tomb on which he had caused to be inscribed the significant words, "À bientôt, Marguerite," he found peace in death by his own hand and fell lifeless on her grave.

Nowhere is the note of love struck with more simple and pleasant effect than in some of our old English ballads, written in an age which loved to freshen life's dusty road with bubbling rills of simple song.

A conspicuous instance is the "Bailiff's Daughter of Islington" (near King's Lynn in Norfolk), loved by a squire's son, who, on account of her indifference, went away to London. Seven years later the Bailiff's daughter, seized with remorse, set out to walk to the great City in ragged attire, "her true love for to find," and near London chanced to meet him out riding. "One penny, one penny, kind sir," said she. "I come from far Islington." "Then prithee, sweetheart," quoth he, "do you know the Bailiff's daughter there?" "She died long ago," was the reply, upon which the young man declared he would go and live an exile in a foreign land. But the Bailiff's daughter explaining matters, her lover joyfully exclaimed, "Farewell, grief, and welcome, joy, for I have found my true love, whom I feared I should never see again." And so they lived happily ever after.

Fiercely tragic is the Spanish tale of the handsome youth, Manuel, who fell in love with Laila, a Moorish maiden of great beauty. The damsel's father disapproved of their marriage, and the young people, fleeing together, were pursued and overtaken near a precipice on the Guadalhorce, to the top of which they climbed, the relentless father meanwhile bidding his followers discharge arrows at them. Eventually, death being inevitable, Laila

and Manuel threw themselves from the rock and perished in the fall, the scene of the tragedy being afterwards known as "The Lovers' Leap."

"And every Moorish maid can tell
Where Laila lies who loved so well;
And every youth who passes there,
Says for Manuel's soul a prayer."

The American Indians told of Mowis, the bridegroom of snow, who wooed and won a beautiful girl, but when the dawn came, he had melted into the sun. In vain the fair one hunted for him night and day—she never saw him more.

The East has also its literature of passionate and unhappy love. The devotion of Leila—the Oriental type of female loveliness, chastity and impassioned affection—to Mejnoun forms the theme of a traditional Mohammedan romance, whilst conjugal love has no more perfect monument than the Taj at Agra—that "poem in white marble" which Shah Jehan caused to be erected in memory of his favourite Sultana, Moomtaz-i-Mahal, who perished whilst giving birth to her eighth child.

The most pathetic legend of Eastern love is perhaps the Japanese tale of the ill-fated couple—Gompatchi and his true love Komurasaki, who was as fair to look upon as the flowers. Her lover, owing to his wild life, having been executed, she

determined not to survive, and, throwing herself upon his newly-made grave, drew a dagger from her girdle and plunged it into her heart. The priests of the temple hard by (so runs the legend), much moved by the loving faithfulness of the beautiful girl, wept over her untimely fate, and, laying her by her true love, erected a memorial called the tomb of the Shiyoku, a word signifying fabulous birds, which, living one within the other, form a mysterious duality emblematic of connubial fidelity.

Upon this they inscribed a touching epitaph, appropriate to many an ill-fated pair. "Beneath this stone lie two birds, beautiful as the cherry blossoms — they perished before their time, like flowers broken down by the wind before they have borne seed."

The sorrows and constancy of the unhappy Komurasaki hallowed the place, and the spot became a shrine, constantly strewn with flowers.

The heroine of most love stories is generally a woman to whom self-sacrifice is almost a necessity. To make herself of small account as compared with the one she loves; to give freely of herself, even though she may receive nothing in return; to suffer, and yet to feel an inner poignant joy in all this suffering—such are the traits which have exercised the pens of countless individuals of all national-

ities, who have written of passionate love. This, even when illicit, ever commands the sympathy of humanity, which at heart recognizes the truth of the dictum of Chamfort: "Quand un homme et une femme ont l'un pour l'autre une passion violente, il me semble toujours que quels que soient les obstacles qu'ils séparent, un mari, des parents, etc., les deux amants sont l'un à l'autre, de par la Nature, qu'ils s'appartiennent de droit divine, malgré les lois et les conventions humaines."

Passionate love is a dream of such an overwhelmingly attractive kind that those possessed by it contemplate an infinite blessedness which makes all else joyless, hollow and insupportable. Even the lower grades of this passion not infrequently appear to the ordinary man as poetical episodes which illuminate the murky atmosphere of his prosaic existence, whilst in numberless cases a most ordinary, stupid and even ill-favoured woman figures as a beautiful heroine, surrounded by a radiant halo of attraction. The saying, "La plus belle femme du monde ne peut donner que ce qu'elle a," is entirely untrue. She gives exactly what a lover thinks he receives; for in such matters it is imagination which fixes the value.

Nature cares nothing for the feelings of lovers —what it does care for is that the two should long

to become one, with the result that their number is generally augmented to three.

Recognizing the illusions which this passion involves, cynics have laughed at love, and some have even ventured to question its very existence; but, as Doctor Johnson said, we must not ridicule a passion which he who never felt never was happy, and he who laughs at never deserves to feel—a passion which has caused the change of empires and the loss of worlds—a passion which has inspired heroism and subdued avarice.

Not a few like La Rochefoucauld, have classed passionate love as being akin to ghosts, of which every one speaks, but which no one has ever seen. They have been entirely wrong. Passionate love has always existed, and must always exist whilst humanity endures. A mere glance at the daily police reports discovers its unchanging strength.

The gratification of this passion will ever be the ultimate goal of the preponderating bulk of human effort—in a great proportion of instances, leading to trouble, unhappiness and sorrow, and in not a few involving the loss of well-being, tranquillity and even life itself.

No greater truth was probably ever uttered than Villon's "Pour un plaisir mille douleurs."

Passionate love indeed entangles its victims in

every kind of disagreeable predicament—it separates friends and relations, not infrequently destroys health and social position, whilst, on occasion, turning honest men into blackguards.

As a great, if misanthropic, German philosopher once said of the passion in question, "on the whole it appears as a malevolent demon that strives to prevent, confuse, and overthrow everything."

Of the two sexes woman is the greatest sufferer, never hesitating to sacrifice everything for love. Man occasionally does hover on the brink of the precipice, but he, too, often takes the fatal leap.

A lover indeed is under the influence of an irresistible impulse which not infrequently compels him, in spite of reason, to pursue his end, which not even death itself can make him abandon.

This feeling is indeed akin to the instinct of insects, which, in some cases, urges the male to risk a horrible fate.

The triumphant drone, who has risen higher in the air than his fellows, and won the queen bee, drops to the ground dead after the nuptial embrace; whilst a certain species of spider [1] forms a meal for his

[1] Owing to the smaller size of the male and the greater voracity of the females, the male makes his advances to his mate at the risk of his life, and is not infrequently killed and eaten either before or after pairing has been effected. Fully aware of the danger he pays his addresses with extreme caution, frequently waiting for

bride immediately after he has enjoyed her favours. An outcry for equal rights of the sexes in the insect world would indeed be based upon well-founded reasons!

In sober truth the spirit of love, in numberless instances, is but a relentless enemy and pursuer of the individual, always ready to destroy personal happiness, or even life itself, in order to carry out its ends.

An individual overcome by love in a great measure loses control over himself, and his disposition and character not infrequently undergo considerable alteration, producing comical and even tragic results. He is for the time being swayed by an altogether new spirit, and no longer belongs to himself; with the result that his behaviour may become unsuitable and hurtful to his own interests. Love generally develops a certain amount of poetic feeling in the breast of even the most prosaic mortals; whilst, in its highest manifestations, its irresistible vision appears so radiant that the downfall of the hopes which it inspires causes life to lose all charm, and even overcomes the fear of death.

Unsatisfied love has its countless tragedies; but

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hours in her vicinity before venturing to come to close quarters. —"Spiders," in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th edition, vol. xxv, p. 665.

satisfied love has them as well, and gratified passion is often disastrous to happiness, its exigencies generally conflicting with the personal welfare of those most concerned, and undermining plans built up on very shadowy foundations. Many a man is led by love to link his life with some woman who, apart from her physical attentions, is hateful and abhorrent to his nature. Many a wise, learned and cultivated individual has awoke from a dream of fallacious love to find himself linked to a veritable she-devil, and spent the rest of his life silently wondering how he ever came to make such a disastrous choice. "Who marries from love must live in sorrow," says the Spanish proverb.

With good reason did the ancients represent Cupid as being blind; for an ardent lover, distinctly and bitterly aware of the faults of temperament and character which promise him a miserable life, nevertheless seldom ceases to press his suit.

"I ask not, I care not,
If guilt's in thy heart,
I know that I love thee,
Whatever thou art."

Too often Cupid—the lord of gods and men—in spite of his childish appearance shows himself to be a malevolent, cruel, capricious and despotic demon. A deadly aim, blindness, and wings are his attri-

butes. The latter signify inconstancy, a failing, alas, which appears with the disillusion so frequently sustained by successful lovers.

The real truth of the matter is that Nature, which moves in an absolutely ruthless way to further her ends, would appear to regard the love-passion of humanity merely as the means of maintaining the numbers of the race, and, with this object in view, has implanted an ineradicable instinct which admirably accomplishes her purpose.

Men, wrote Montaigne, say what they will, do not marry for themselves, they marry as much or more for the sake of posterity and their families.

The philosopher, Chamfort, being asked why Nature had caused love to be quite independent of human reason, replied: "C'est parce que la nature ne songe qu'au maintien de l'espèce; et pour la perpétuer, elle n'a que faire de notre sottise. Qu'étant ivre, je m'adresse à une servante de cabaret ou à une fille, le but de la nature sera peut-être aussi bien rempli que si j'eusse obtenu Clarisse après deux ans de soins; au lieu que ma raison me sauverait de la servante, de la fille, et de Clarisse même, peut-être. A ne consulter que la raison, quel est l'homme qui voudrait être père et se préparer tant de soucis pour un long avenir? Quelle femme, pour une épilepsie de quelques minutes, se donnerait une maladie d'une

année entière? La nature, en nous dérobant à notre raison, assure mieux son empire ; et voilà pourquoi elle a mis de niveau sur ce point Zénobie et sa fille de basse-cour, Marc-Aurèle et son palefrenier."

A remarkable fact is that when, at various periods of the world's history, individuals have conceived the idea that the apparently haphazard way in which Nature provides for the production of a future generation was capable of improvement, all their efforts have proved futile.

Thalestris, Queen of the Amazons, when Alexander the Great was passing through her country went to meet him with three hundred light horse—all of her own sex—finely mounted and well armed, the advance guard of a great army which she left behind in the neighbouring hills.

Entering the conquering Emperor's presence, she told him that the fame of his victories and valour had brought her there to see him and to make him an offer of her forces to assist him in his enterprises.

"I find you," said she, "so handsome, young and vigorous, that I who am also perfect in those qualities suggest that we should worship the goddess of love together, in order that from the most valiant woman in the world and the most valiant man, some great and wonderful issue may hereafter spring."

Alexander thanked her, and to give time for the accomplishment of her demand, stayed in the country thirteen days, which were spent to the satisfaction of the heroic Princess and both armies. There is, however, no historical evidence that any human prodigy was the result.

Another experimentalist in this direction was Frederick William I of Prussia, one of whose chief hobbies, as is well known, was a regiment of giant grenadiers. Most of these colossi, however, had some defect, but the King cared little for this, provided they were tall—indeed, the gift of a recruit of six feet might be counted on to secure Frederick William's friendship; of six feet two, his warmest alliance; and so on in proportion. The tallest and finest of these grenadiers was an Irishman, by name James Kirkland, whose "procural" and transmission from his native bogs to the parade-ground at Potsdam cost the Prussian King upwards of £1,200 sterling. No one, indeed, whose stature had obtained a more than ordinary growth was safe from the hands of his Majesty's agents. His passion for tall soldiers led him to wish to raise a race of large people, so as to be able to recruit a giant regiment without trouble, but in this endeavour he was entirely unsuccessful, whilst producing a good deal of unhappiness. One day meeting a

very tall and well-made village girl in the neighbourhood of Potsdam, he asked her to take a note, which he wrote on the spot, to the captain of his regiment. Either suspecting something, or being in a hurry, the girl gave the note to a little old woman whom she fell in with, and charged her to deliver it as directed. This note contained an order to the captain to have the bearer instantly married to the tallest man in the regiment, whose name was specified. On being informed of his fate, and introduced to his bride, the poor young fellow was in despair. 'He begged and entreated, fell on his knees and wept, but all to no purpose; the Royal will was law, and the matrimonial noose was tied. Happily, the King, on hearing of the exchange of brides that had been made, allowed the marriage to be dissolved.

Unfortunately, the lover who from a physical and romantic point of view is ideal, seldom makes the best of husbands. The very violence of his passion causes it to die away, only to blaze forth once more when some new object of attraction enslaves his ardent fancy.

The perfect husband, that is, ideal according to the strict conventions of human society, is generally devoid of great passion or romance. Louis XVI, of unfortunate memory, was such a one, loving his

wife in his own dull, heavy, good-natured way, probably as much because she was his wife as for any other reason, and consistently faithful to her, because, though he had innumerable temptations and opportunities, it never occurred to him to be anything else. Only on a single occasion, it is said, did he ever deviate from the strict path of marital rectitude; this was when a flighty serving-wench overcame his reserve as the King was passing through the corridors of Versailles.

Rousseau said that the whole interest of the drama turned upon two things—marriage and murder. "In the comedy the plot turns on marriage, in tragedy it turns on murder! The whole intrigue in one and the other turns on this grand event—will they marry? will they not marry? will they murder? will they not murder? There will be a marriage, there will be a murder; and this forms act the first. There will be no marriage, there will be no murder; and this gives birth to act the second. A new mode of marrying and murdering is prepared for act the third. A new difficulty impedes the marriage or the murder, which the fourth act discusses. At last the marriage or the murder is effected for the benefit of the concluding act."

The most happy marriages are those with which

passionate love has little to do. "Love seeks to give, while passion seeks to take."

The views of many wise men as to the best method of ensuring a satisfactory union have inclined towards the "mariage de convenance," still popular in France. Montaigne, for instance, declared that in his experience no marriages miscarried sooner than those spurred on by beauty and amorous desires. That "furious ardour" in which so many lovers have delighted was in his estimation good for nothing.

Whilst confessing that had he entirely followed his own inclinations he would never have married, this wise and sanely thinking man at the same time admitted that a good, that is to say, a successful marriage was the happiest of all states in human society.

Of all the curses that afflict and torment society, as well as the individuals immediately concerned, an ill-assorted marriage is about the worst—a fœtid hotbed of misery and vice. It leads to all manner of moral perversions—the physical wrong, moral neglect, and general demoralization being among the most prominent and distressing. It sends paupers to our workhouses and felons to our gaols, and when it is borne in mind how powerfully, and in what an infinite variety of ways marriage affects the political and moral condition of the community at large, even

the less disastrous consequences of a multitude of ill-advised unions must be acknowledged to exercise a pernicious and widely-spread influence on the happiness and well-being of the world at large.

The cause of many an unhappy marriage is the divergence between an institution devised for the well-being of human society and the dictates of nature. The progeny of a man during a year, in a state of polygamy, might be very large; a woman, on the contrary, during the same period, can have but two children, "twins," or very rarely three, "triplets." For this reason, male faithfulness is a virtue of artificial growth, totally unlike female fidelity, which is based upon far more important considerations, one of the chief of which is that it is necessary for the well-being of the race that a woman should cling to the protector of her future offspring.

As a general rule it may safely be affirmed that, by nature, man is inclined to inconstancy in love, woman to constancy. The love of the man sinks perceptibly from the moment it has obtained satisfaction; almost every other woman charms him more than the one he already possesses; he longs for variety.

> "Think you if Laura had been Petrarch's wife,
> He would have written sonnets all his life?"

The love of woman, on the other hand, usually increases just from that moment. Not infrequently,

however, passionate sexual love associates itself with a feeling of an entirely different origin—real friendship, based upon agreement of disposition, which yet for the most part only appears when sexual love is extinguished in its satisfaction.

The writer remembers having read an ingenious essay in which was put forward the contention that the inferiority of the Latin races as regards commercial and industrial development was in a great measure due to the sway which passion exercised over the minds of their young men, whereas in more northern latitudes love was altogether a less unsettling factor in the life of the individual—and very likely this is true.

To the young Frenchman or Italian a *grande passion* (or what he imagines to be a *grande passion*) is very life. The young Englishman, on the other hand, generally thinks of love (if he thinks of it at all) in a vague sort of way, as being connected with marriage dependent upon the acquirement of a sufficient income, a house of his own and settling down to serene domesticity, which his training has led him to think the natural end of a respectable existence. At the proper time he sets out to look for a wife—very often merely because he thinks he ought to have one—much as he would proceed were he about to purchase a motor, horse, gun or pair of

boots; is duly enmeshed in the chains of matrimony, and adopts the usual habits pertaining to that condition. Meanwhile, however, he has been little influenced by anything approaching passionate love, with the result that his days are passed in a very comfortable, if totally unexciting, state of prosperity.

As his union has not been produced by any frenzied adoration for the lady of his choice he will probably escape suffering from jealousy or from any of the thousand and one other inconveniences and disillusions which are the almost invariable concomitants of ardent passion. Perfectly satisfied that he has done his duty, he is in no way disquieted as he observes the disappearance of any trace of beauty from his wife's features. This he rightly regards as being the natural state of things pertaining to married life, and so he goes to the grave without his serenity having ever been ruffled by the woman with whom he has elected to live. Satisfactory and contented households, as a rule, are the result of two equably tempered individuals, moving in the same social sphere, mating rather from purposes of general convenience than from any particular feeling of infatuation. The fact that both mutually acquiesce in calling their inclination towards a very suitable and convenient arrangement by the much misapplied name of "love," does not affect the matter at all.

According to a certain school of social reformers which exercises considerable influence over some of our "wallowing politicians," the primitive instincts of humanity are capable of being changed by restrictive legislation designed to ensure the undeviating monogamy which the man of the future is to accept with joy.

This Utopian forecast is little more than a sexless dream. Were humanity to acquire such powers of self-control, it must of necessity be owing to the weakening of those vital powers which form the mainspring of the world, and coincide with the existence of a race too feeble to hold its own in the hard struggle for existence.

Though but an infinitesimal number dare to say so, the prurient fanaticism which intermittently rages in England is quite capable of becoming a national danger—the voice of extreme Puritanism, let it be remembered, called for the expulsion of Nelson from the quarter-deck, and would have lost England the command of the seas.

In 1805 the liaison of the great naval hero with Lady Hamilton provoked an outcry for some *more moral* admiral to be appointed in his stead. Fortunately saner counsels prevailed. Fanaticism, though it failed to depose the invincible chieftain of the seas, saw to it that his injunctions as to the

woman he had loved should be uncared-for and forgotten.

The Reverend William Nelson, brother of the great Admiral, who succeeded to the title and a large sum of public money, seems to have been prevented by the hue of his cloth (which, if Christianity were really practised, should be the symbol of broad-mindedness and toleration) from taking any interest in his brother's mistress, and no doubt thought it perfectly fitting that she should be buried, with a half-pay Irish Dragoon acting as chaplain, and a black silk petticoat stitched on a white curtain thrown over her coffin for a pall.

So was the *bonne amie* of Nelson laid to rest in the timber yard at Calais, which town paid the expenses of her poor funeral.

According to the monstrous code advocated by a section which claims to have charge of the national morals,[1] Wellington, owing to his occasional

[1] Within recent years, by the irony of fate, the glorious British Navy—itself so free from hypocrisy and cant—has been indirectly connected with militant Puritanism.

About a quarter of a century ago, the most ardent advocate of raising the national standard of morality by compulsion was a retired naval officer, whose public career, however, came to an abrupt end owing to his conviction and imprisonment for debauchery of the most depraved kind.

His place as supporter of legislative attempts to moralize England has of course been taken by others—amongst them, Mr. Alan Burgoyne, M.P., Honorary Secretary of the Navy League.

polygamy, would not have been allowed to command at Waterloo.

Moderation in all things is difficult—nowhere more so than in the sphere of national morality. A striking example of this is modern France, where, in place of our own turgid stream of unctuous rectitude, an undercurrent of sensualism makes its influence felt.

Permeated by the spirit of the ancient Gauls, our neighbours across the Channel extend considerable toleration to much which is "merrily evil."

The French (many of whom at heart consider sexuality to be the mainspring of life) absolutely decline to attach importance to the utterances of self-constituted moralists; the English never fail to accord an enthusiastic reception to any one professing to reform mankind, whilst when, as not infrequently happens, one of these champions of a higher morality is discovered to be anything but a paragon of virtue his case is soon forgotten, and the authority of his successors in no wise impaired. As a result of a sort of gigantic conspiracy, an impression that immorality is being stamped out is steadily fostered, whilst all statements to this effect are allowed to pass without question.

A witness giving evidence before the Divorce Commission actually affirmed his conviction that

the standard of morality was going up by leaps and bounds!

For the same reason which makes it bad form to speak of the rope in the house of the hangman, any effort to rend the veil of humbug with which this subject has been so skilfully enveloped is looked at askance—he who has the temerity to make the attempt will be ignored, pooh-poohed, or overwhelmed by a cataract of self-complacent reprobation—at best he will be told that he is merely saying what has been said before.

Nevertheless, the observer who views the facts of life with an impartial eye well knows that in spite of legislation, in spite of suppression, sexual morality remains and will remain unchanged.

Monogamous marriage, it must be remembered, is of no very profound antiquity, though even the cave-man of prehistoric times in all probability lived in a close companionship with some particular female. The informal union in question, however, was merely for a limited time, that is to say, it lasted only so long as the male did not tire of his partner. The day upon which a man, for the first time, consented to bind himself formally to one particular woman was also the day on which man first began to abandon the position of dominance and superiority which his more robust and hardy

physical development gave him over his weaker companion—as a matter of fact the new departure, whilst possibly essential to the growth of civilization, and productive of great good, has also entailed much misery; for nature entirely ignores all human arrangements, and mankind remains polygamous as of yore. The point of view taken by the strongest and most virile members of the human race, as regards themselves (for almost without exception every one, at least in historic times, has prescribed and does prescribe an undeviating sexual morality for the rest of the world), has been inclined towards laxity, and as a matter of fact the overwhelming majority have, in practice, leaned towards the free polygamy of the remote ancestors of the human race. Especially remarkable is the polygamous tendency exhibited by great conquering soldiers, leaders of men, poets and others endowed with what is known as the artistic temperament, the manifestation of which is generally connected with great cerebral vitality.

Certain women also are by nature incapable of conforming with the moral standard which it is usually accounted an honour for the sex to observe. Pauline Borghèse, according to her brother Napoleon the loveliest woman in Europe, was a conspicuous instance. A contemporary,

Pasquier, declared that no woman except the wife of the Roman Emperor Claudius had ever been so daring in the display of her charms.

That she was addicted to easy love is certain, some have even called her a female Don Juan. She laughed at her brother's *amourettes*, and did not understand any woman resisting his advances.

When, for instance, Madame Mathis described how she had indignantly repelled Napoleon, Pauline said, "You should understand, Madame, that one must not say 'no' to a wish expressed by the Emperor."

As quite a young girl she gave indications of being endowed with a temperament of fire, and from her earliest years she was prone to musings about love.

"Sometimes it was the wandering wind,
Sometimes the murmur of a pine,
Sometimes the thought how others sinned,
That turned her warm blood into wine."

Her first marriage is said to have been brought about owing to pressing reasons. Bonaparte was devoted to his beautiful sister, and she often came into his study. Working there one day with General Leclerc, he suddenly became aware that the officer had disappeared. Hearing a noise behind a screen in the corner of the room, Bonaparte went to ascertain its cause, which he discovered was some

ardent love-making between Pauline and the General. The marriage took place as soon as possible.

Once married, Leclerc found his path strewn with anything but flowers, for his wife was capricious and wayward in her fancies, and her temperament of *amoureuse* not well calculated for domestic bliss.

Pauline with much charm had all the caprices and incongruities of a pleasure-loving aristocrat. She was, indeed, considered the one *veritable princesse* of the Bonaparte family. She retained some of the old etiquette of the ancient court of France—for instance, her chemise was ceremoniously handed to her when she left her bath, after which she would usually walk about the dressing-room for a time, preening herself like a glorious peacock.

Not very long after Leclerc died his wife re-married, choosing Camillo Philippo Luigi, Prince Borghèse, great-nephew of the Pope Paul V, and Prince of Sulmona and Rossano. The bridegroom was a handsome man of twenty-eight, very rich, but inclined to be avaricious. Pauline, however, soon tired of the stately splendour which prevailed in her husband's palace at Rome, and began those wanderings about the Continent which in course of time amounted almost to mania. Henceforth, Prince Borghèse remained her husband only in name, and a series of lovers took his place. Amongst these

was M. de Montrond, a man celebrated for exploits of gallantry. He won the smiles of many famous beauties, including Madame Récamier and Lady Yarmouth;—he is indeed said to have been the father of her eccentric son, Lord Henry Seymour—an Englishman who never set foot in England and enlivened Paris by every sort of wild escapade. Pauline met her handsome lover at the famous ball given by Madame de Permon, where the radiant beauty of Napoleon's sister created a great sensation.

That evening she captured two hearts, that of a M. de Montbreton and of Montrond. The latter, who combined the grace of an Adonis with the strength of Hercules, was a particularly handsome man, and charmed every woman he met, whilst respected by men owing to his skill with the sword and the readiness of his repartee.

In bad luck at *écarté*, playing with an old revolutionist who had voted for the death of Louis XVI, he said to him, "I see you still retain your old habit of cutting kings."

Late for a ball, his hostess reminded him that Louis XIV had called punctuality the politeness of kings. "True, Madame," replied Montrond, looking at the opulent pulchritude of her bosom, "but he was wrong when he said that the Pyrenees had ceased to exist."

Though a good soldier, he was a dandy; before setting out for the wars it was said that his valet used to inquire, "À quelle odeur monsieur le comte fera-t-il sa campagne?"

Such a man was little to Napoleon's taste, and perceiving his sister's fascination, he determined to bring the liaison to an abrupt end. Before long Montrond was advised by the police to absent himself from Paris. He contrived, however, to renew relations with Pauline at Spa, and the latter did her best to get the edict of banishment from Paris relaxed, but her brother was inflexible, and a short time later her handsome lover drifted out of her life.

Another soldier who for a time captivated the affections of the beautiful Pauline was M. de Canouville, an officer on the staff of Marshal Berthier, which staff, composed of splendid-looking men, was the perpetual joy of Napoleon's sisters—vivacious women whom Baron Thiébault maliciously declared all the Garde Impériale put together would have been powerless to satisfy.

Canouville had gained a scandalous notoriety by his shameless impudence in affairs of gallantry and love, and this effrontery he retained in his relations with Pauline.

One day the famous dentist Bousquet having

been summoned to attend the Princess Borghèse perceived, on being ushered into her room, an elegant young man in a rich dressing-gown lounging on a couch.

"Take care," said the latter, "about what you are going to do; I attach great importance to my little Pauline's teeth, and shall hold you responsible for any mishap."

Bousquet reassured the luxurious exquisite, and, having successfully performed his task, ceremoniously took his leave. Meeting some of the Princess's suite outside, he expressed his delight at the scene of conjugal felicity which it had been his privilege to see. "The Princess," added he, "should be very happy with a husband who watches over her with such tender solicitude." The chamberlains and ladies-in-waiting could hardly keep from bursting out into laughter, for the charming young man was not Prince Borghèse but M. de Canouville.

Such conduct could not long escape the notice of the Emperor, who, unlike his beautiful sister, never cared to flout public opinion in Paris.

Amongst the presents which he had brought back from Erfurt were three superb pelisses of rare perfection—the fur of *martre zibeline* given him by the Emperor Alexander. One of these pelisses he occasionally wore himself, the second he gave to

On Pauline's numerous liaisons, with Talma, the Comte de Forbin, Maxime de Villemarest, Blangini, and many others, it is here unnecessary to dwell. Enough that it seemed as if nothing was able to cure Napoleon's favourite sister of her ineradicable fondness for facile love.

Always a very delicate woman, she was stricken down with severe illness in 1823, after having two years before petitioned for leave to join her brother, the fallen Emperor, to whom she was ever faithfully attached, in his exile at Longwood. She now became somewhat sobered, and before her death in 1825 was reconciled to her husband, Prince Borghèse, from whom she had long lived apart. To his great honour, now that the gates of eternity were opening before his erring wife, he consented to pardon and forget.

The end of this Imperial Venus, the incarnation of irresponsible love, was strangely touching. Stern Time—that tyrant who is never content to fold his wings—in due course accomplished what the precepts of morality had been unable to effect. As a graceful swallow, before its autumnal flight, ceases to play, Pauline in her last hours abandoned all thoughts of frivolity, and devoted her failing energies to making a will in which none of her friends were forgotten. Then without one rancor-

his old flame Désirée Clary, married to Bernadotte, and the third to Pauline, who, when Canouville remarked one day that the fur would make a beautiful border for his uniform, passed it on to him.

As luck would have it, a short time later at a review, the horse of Pauline's lover running away, cannoned into that of Napoleon; the latter, turning round white with rage, recognized the splendid furs given to his sister. That very evening Canouville was ordered to set out with despatches for Masséna, then campaigning in Spain; and henceforth the Emperor took good care that the dashing officer should never remain long in Paris—as a bearer of despatches, he was kept constantly on the move.

In 1812 Canouville was sent with the Grande Armée to Russia, which plunged Pauline and a number of creditors into profound gloom.

The Princess had become so fond of him that she organized a special service of couriers to see him personally and report to her on his health, but fate brought the duties of these men to a speedy end.

At the Moskowa the amorous soldier met his death. Found weltering in a sea of blood, friends looking for some signs of life came upon the miniature of Pauline next a heart which had for ever ceased to beat. This miniature the gallant Murat did not fail to return to the Princess.

ous feeling in her heart—forgiving and forgiven—like some beautiful wounded creature, she nestled in the arms of her husband, and met death with dignity and resignation.

After the example of Pope's Narcissa, she could not bear to think that she need be frightful in death, and as her end approached begged that no scalpel might touch the lovely limbs which Canova has transmitted to us in his incomparable marble.

At the time of her death, illness had not seriously impaired the charms of this "grande amoureuse," and perhaps it was not unfitting that she should have departed before old age had laid its grim talons upon her superb frame.

Nothing indeed is sadder than the usual fate of lovely women whose lives have been devoted to ardent love. For them the progress of the years means oblivion, and too often their souls die before their weary bodies, their only real life being in the past which, looming through a sad twilight, recalls the shadowy remembrance of vanished charms. The poor things are like withered flowers, but for them, in this world, at least, there is no spring.

A peculiarly striking instance of a beauty who lived to be forgotten was the Comtesse Castiglione, in her younger days one of the most beautiful women

of the court of the Second Empire. When, however, age began to rob her of her charms she led the life of a recluse, not being able to bear contact with the pleasure-loving Parisian society which had once been at her feet. The intense pathos which attaches to senility in wŏman has struck poets in all ages; but of all the verse written on this subject none is more poignant than the *Ballade de la Belle Heaulmière*, addressed by François Villon to the careless girls who laughed and loved in that old Paris which has long been swept away.

II

Love in the Middle Ages—John of Lancaster and his French Sweetheart—A Love Story of Old France—The Old Baron, his Daughter, and the Young Knight—An Elopement—Meeting with Ruffians — The Lovers' Fate — Splendid Courtesans—"Mars gave Rome the Empire of the World and Venus Imperia"—Pietro Aretino and this Beautiful Light of Love—Her Power and Riches—Arrival of Imperia at Constance—Adventure with Ecclesiastical Lovers—Given a Palace by the Cardinal of Ragusa—The Death of her Daughter alters her Disposition—Despair of Gallants at her Austerity—She falls in Love with a Young French Knight—Her Marriage, Noble Devotion, and Death

In the days of which Villon sang, the course of true love rarely ran smooth, and many a lover had to fight for the object of his affections, carrying, as it were, his life in his hand, and trusting to sword and dagger for protection against rivals. Dangerous and reckless characters scoured the countryside, and in the cities the narrow streets and dark lanes, ill-lighted and unguarded, were the scene of midnight murder and assassination. If a man's life was threatened, he must protect it by his own strength, or by gathering about him a band of friends. No one was safe.

At that time women often played an important part in assisting their lovers to carry out some

warlike enterprise. A notable instance was the capture of Guîsnes near Calais by the English, due to the love of a little *blanchisseuse* for John de Lancaster, a gallant archer who had followed Edward III—that king whose name sounds like a trumpet call through our history—across the Channel to France.

Four years after Calais had become English soil, John de Lancaster found himself a prisoner in the Château of Guîsnes, the possession of which was much coveted by his countrymen.

He was a merry fellow, and, to lighten his captivity, easily obtained permission to handle a spade with some French workmen employed upon the repair of the bastions. Free to move about within the precincts of the castle, the bold and amorous bowman soon gained the affections of a pretty girl, who obtained for him a piece of rope, with which, having measured the height of the walls, he lowered himself to the moat, swam across, and, traversing the marshes, reached Calais. There he obtained permission to attempt the capture of the château from which he had escaped, and, setting out at nightfall with thirty volunteers, scaled the walls and overpowered the guards before they realized what was happening. The Governor, William de Beaucourry, was away at a fête at St. Ouen, and the castle was

full of knights and ladies whom John de Lancaster, as an admirer of the fair sex, treated with great courtesy.

In those days though generally quite wide awake and far more independent than is generally supposed, girls were held in great subservience by their fathers, who very often made them marry rich old husbands little to their taste. Such a fate many a damsel only escaped by arranging that a real lover—generally some handsome young knight—should abduct her. Of an adventure of this kind the following story tells.

In a certain part of France during the fifteenth century there dwelt in his château a powerful Baron of ancient lineage and renowned for many feats of arms.

In his hot youth he had led a wild life, squeezing the maidens, and, as the saying went, playing the devil with everything. Consequently it was not long after coming into his inheritance that he began to find a lack of crowns in his treasury, when, after the manner of Barons of his day, he determined to set out and retrieve his fortunes in the career of arms —a resolve which gave his friends and neighbours great delight. Wandering into divers countries, he dealt many lusty blows for himself and the King, little caring whether they fell upon friends or foe; he

had never been a curious man, and did not trouble about questioning those with whom he found himself engaged in combat till he had killed them—like a good Frenchmen, he was ready to make soup of anything.

At length after the lapse of years, satiated with slaughter, to the astonishment and trepidation of the countryside he returned once more to his château—not like so many warriors, maimed, sick, and bereft of gold, but bringing with him a store sufficient to enable him to live on his lands.

Taking to himself a wife, in his latter years he developed all the signs of lordly perfection, became prudent and staid, never quarrelling except when people refused to give way, and, as timid neighbours told him, giving every sign of attaining Paradise, whence all Barons formerly came.

From having been an extravagant, reckless youth, he had grown into a wise man who preferred to keep his fists closed, and husband his estate.

His household was small, for, besides his wife, he had but one child, a beautiful girl, seventeen years old—the most delicate flower that ever heaven allowed to fall upon the earth. Highly attractive, and possessed of many accomplishments, her father determined to give her in marriage to a neighbour —a wealthy man of obscure origin, over eighty

years old, who, by his cunning devices, had acquired as many lands as a dog has hairs, and had taken it into his head to offer the young lady's father a domain in consideration of his consent to such an alliance.

The young girl, however, refused to listen to the music of her aged admirer's voice and manifesting the greatest disinclination for him, persistently refused to agree to what seemed to her an odious match; all in vain did her father point out that once married she might roll in gold, and make her old husband come and go like a miller's mule.

The fact was that her heart was already lost to a certain handsome young Knight of moderate possessions who lived not very far away. For some time the young couple had contrived to arrange surreptitious meetings—to them a source of untold bliss. Never were lovers more united—the same flame leaped in their hearts, the same harmony of love sounded for both. When they met they embraced with delicious rapture, which banished the thought of their troubles, and made them forgetful of the stern unrelenting old Baron, of death, of life, of everything. The young Knight, royally handsome and noble in his bearing, whilst amorous as a caged lion had led an upright and virtuous life, and had ever kept himself on guard against the poisoned needles

of irregular love. Although he had seen a good deal of the world and had plenty of spirit and animation, he had remained virtuous as a true saint—had resisted the blandishments of cities, and passed the days of his green season without once dragging his good name in the mire, for he possessed a character strong as tempered steel.

Though every sort of obstacle was placed in their way, the young people continued to have frequent meetings, and in spite of the gloomy outlook, they were convinced that they would eventually be united. Exchanging kindling glances and quickening kisses, together they would recite the sweet and mystic litanies of love, the responses to which the pretty damsel uttered in faint tones like the distant cooing of a dove amongst the woodlands. Entirely absorbed by their loyal love their hearts leapt with passion, and their innocent minds as it were burned one against the other. The young Knight thought there were no jewels so sparkling as his sweetheart's eyes, no vellum whiter than her skin, no girl so exquisitely shaped; whilst she, for her part, admired his manly grace and fearless glance.

At last came the day when the young lady's father informed her that the time for the celebration of her nuptials with his ancient friend had arrived

which announcement caused her much disquietude and pain. Nevertheless she did not lose heart, but at once sending for her handsome gallant, told him that her mind was made up, and no contracts, deeds or engagements should ever bind her to any one except him.

"M'amye très chère," replied her swain, "since your goodness of heart is willing to accord me that for which I should have asked only with great trepidation—if your mind is really made up I know very well what we ought to do. Let us select a certain day where, at an appointed spot, I can find you alone and ready. Fleet horses shall await us and together we will ride away. Then (provided we can appease Monseigneur your father) we will proceed to the fulfilment of those vows which it has been our delight to exchange."

The damsel approved of this plan, and told her lover that she understood how it could be put into execution if he would fix the day and hour for their meeting.

Everything being eventually arranged, the amorous couple met at a certain rendezvous, where, having mounted their palfreys, they set out as fast as they could, as happy as swimmers sporting in the waters of the Loire.

The girl, on a beautiful milk-white mare, wore a

robe of green, laced with fine gold, whilst a rich girdle encircled her dainty waist. Her lover galloped before her, his eye bright as a hawk's, whilst behind cantered his men-at-arms, whom he had brought to watch over the security of the journey.

These, however, he soon bade scour the country round in order to guard against pursuit and to be alone with his darling, whom he entreated to ride slowly in order to spare her from fatigue. Before dismissing his men-at-arms he instructed them to meet him at a certain large village, which he named. As, however, fate would have it, the young couple reached the said village before their escort, which, by evil chance missed the way. The place was full of all sorts of rough characters, for it was a fête day, and the street rang with sounds of rustic revelry and rejoicing. Entering the best inn in the place, the Knight urged the host to set meat and drink on the table, for it was late and the damsel sorely tired; and whilst the meal was preparing the lovers withdrew to an upper chamber. Hardly, however, had they done so, when four ruffianly drovers burst rudely into the inn and demanded to be shown the pretty wench who had just ridden up with a young spark. "We like," said they, "drinking and chaffing with such pleasant baggage."

In vain did the host, who well knew who the

couple were, declare that the lady was not of the kind they thought. The ruffians only replied that were she not produced at once they would pull the house down and abduct her by force. Upon this the host, who was a good-hearted and honest man, did his best to explain that the girl was the betrothed of the Knight—a young man of great bravery and valour, who had performed many notable feats of arms which had won him fame.

"Gentlemen," concluded he, thinking to appease the wretches by flattery, "leave this young lady of noble birth in peace. Goodness knows that to-day our streets are full of women who will be only too happy to humour all your whims."

"Enough of your preaching," cried the desperadoes, whose worst desires were now thoroughly roused, "we are determined to see the girl, and, what is more, make love to her if we choose to do so."

The host, perceiving that matters were becoming serious, went up-stairs to the room in which were the lovers, and, taking the Knight aside, told him of the grave dangers close at hand, his story being interrupted by ribald shouting from below.

A fearful foreboding now seized the lovers, whose smiles like autumn dropped away, and told them that they were falling into an abyss. They clung

together, desiring, as it were, to concentrate all the love of their souls in one embrace—for they knew love, not after the manner of easy-going citizens, living mechanically with their good wives, but as the hot gush of life—and so, tremulous with passion, they ardently embraced in face of the imminent peril which they knew to lie before them. Almost unconsciously they foresaw that their love was to be cut short in its spring, and recited to each other what was in truth a litany of amorous farewells whilst the gods of pity looked down.

Then, girding on his sword, the young Knight set out determined to defend and preserve his pretty jewel to the last.

Face to face with the ruffians, he was greeted by jeers, jokes and laughter, meet to turn a lover's heart sick. At first they shouted to him to sit down and drink with them, but when he replied that he would meet them in any battle but that of the wine-flasks, they grew angry, and began to indulge in threats. His brave youth and manly bearing found no grace before such a tribunal of wretches, who declared that as he would not drink he had better produce his girl, whom, they added, they were determined to see.

"Beaux seigneurs," replied he, "if you knew anything about me you would realize that I am not a

man to travel abroad with the kind of woman whom you want to meet—such follies have never appealed to me; and should they ever do so, God forbid that I should practise them in my own part of France. The demoiselle up-stairs is a young virgin of noble birth, whom I started to bring here accompanied by my men-at-arms, who will not be long in catching us up. I warn you that I will defend her as long as a spark of life is left in my body."

While he spoke the ruffians constantly interrupted, declaring that such a story was all lies, for the Knight whom he pretended to be was notorious for never stirring abroad without a large escort; the men-at-arms to whom he had alluded would never arrive; he had better produce the girl at once or else it would be very much the worse for him; and, with further threats, the men made for the staircase, pushing their victim before them.

"Look to yourselves!" cried he. "So many men die in battle for nothing, that one may well die in a good cause."

Thereupon they all rushed at him with a great noise, crying "Death to him! Death to him!" and a fierce battle began.

At first the Knight drove the villains before him towards the door, when, cunningly creeping behind him, one of them contrived to deal the brave young

man a blow with a dagger which stretched him lifeless on the floor. In high glee the murderers forced the landlord to make away with the body, after which they repaired to the room where the poor girl was awaiting her lover's return. Perceiving the evil faces which confronted her, she guessed the truth, and cried out, "What has become of my love, my only protector and stay? Surely evil has befallen me!"

At first the villains tried to reassure her, saying that the Knight had gone to a certain house and sent them to bring her to him, but as she would not believe their story, they soon grew angry and at last said: "Yes, your lover is dead, for we have ridden the countryside of him; and now all four of us are going to enjoy your favours."

The poor girl, trembling from head to foot, fell into a chair, for she perceived the working of the snare into which she had fallen.

Seeing this, the ruffians made a move as to approach their prey; but, starting to her feet, whilst fire flashed from her eyes, she turned upon them and said: "Were I touched by villains such as you I should deem myself contaminated for all eternity. You have looked too often in the faces of vile folk to know what kind of damsel you have to deal with. Pass that line," cried she, pointing

to a board, "and I will kill myself, for I will never fall into your power alive!"

The ruffians then softened their tone and granted her request to speak to one of them alone. She chose him whom she thought she could the most easily soften, but who in reality was the most brutal of all the four. Falling at his feet she entreated him to take pity upon her miserable lot, and with the most humble prayers besought him to save her from a fate worse than death itself. When he made brutal reply she begged him at least to close the shutters so that her shame might not be visible to every passer-by, and whilst he did so, drawing a little knife from her girdle, plunged it into her pretty throat and instantly fell dead at his feet.

Thus did these two loyal lovers, one after the other, end their days. "L'entière et très loyale amour dont les deux cœurs estoient mutuellement entreliez et embrasez" extinguished like a puff of smoke, fate decreeing that they should never taste any of those pleasant delights which they had expected to enliven a long existence of wedded bliss.

As for the ruffians who had caused this tragedy, on perceiving the approach of the dead Knight's men-at-arms, who came too late, they made off with all speed. It is to be supposed, consolingly says the old chronicler, that they

received the punishment which they so thoroughly deserved.

The memory of the tragedy lingered for long years in the countryside, where those who had been lucky in their loves shed tears for the sad fate of the gentle couple, praying that their souls might blossom again in Paradise.

Another mediæval love story is of quite a different sort.

In the Middle Ages, especially upon the Continent, the nobles, knights, and even the ecclesiastics openly led very free lives. The rules of the Church enjoined temperance, continence, and celibacy; but the decrees of Leo IX and Nicholas II and Alexander II and Gregory were only partially observed.

Great courtesans lived in almost royal state, and powerful princes and nobles vied with one another in showering gold upon them. One of the most celebrated of these ladies was the beautiful Imperia, of whom a contemporary poet wrote—

"Mars gave Rome the empire of the world, and Venus Imperia."

Raphael, it is said, took her as his model for the kneeling figure in the "Transfiguration," and in his old age it was the boast of the famous poet Pietro Aretino that he had once been presented to her.

"As a young man," said he, "I saw the glorious Imperia whose fame still endures: she died in her palace, rich, happy and held in high esteem."

This palace, a marvel of sumptuous elegance, was filled with valuable works of art; and the Spanish Ambassador, Enrico de Toledo, is described as having been quite dumbfounded at the wealth of magnificent decorations and costly stuffs which adorned the rooms thronged by men of intellect and rank who accounted it an honour to be received by such a hostess. Though claimed as one of the glories of Rome, Imperia seems in reality to have come from Ferrara, where her family—Cugnati by name—was of some distinction.

Born in 1485, the great courtesan reached the zenith of her fame during the papacy of Pope Julius II, the real founder of the Papal States.

Of immense energy and commanding character, his ambition was to be lord and master of the game of the world.

Notwithstanding this, he was given to licentious excess, and a very free code of morality prevailed amongst the nobles and princes who flocked to pay him court. So much was this the case that at Rome little distinction was made between great ladies and great courtesans, provided the latter possessed intelligence as well as beauty. This

being so, the wit, cleverness and artistic tastes of Imperia, combined with a dazzling and irresistible fascination, soon won her the powers of an Empress.

Men like the poet Beroaldo, and the wealthy banker known as "Chigi the magnificent," were constantly by her side, whilst every stranger of note who came to Rome made a point of visiting her famous palace with its boudoir hung with cloth of gold. Princes, nobles, and great captains were at her beck and call, and to offend her meant death—many a knight being only too ready to break a lance at her bidding. Indeed, one of the French King's most renowned Generals used habitually to ask her whether there was any one whom he could oblige her by killing. This, of course, was said by way of a joke, but nevertheless it always made nervous people look grave. Imperia, indeed, ruled almost every one except the Princes of the Church, and even these she conciliated by diplomacy; whilst not a few, like Cardinal Sadolito, owing to her fascinations found their vows of chastity changed into amorous desires. Most of those who saw her were captivated by the perfection of her features and the magnificent tints of a skin fanned by the flaming wings of Pleasure. Such power did she possess that she was able to turn people's heads to

such an extent as easily to make them take the floor for the ceiling, whilst one of her frowns was sufficient to make an admirer slink away like a miser searching for a lost coin, bowed down, melancholy and utterly cowed.

During the time of the great Council of Constance, when so many high dignitaries—Cardinals, Bishops and others—were assembled, much excitement was caused by the arrival of the famous courtesan, who soon broke many hearts, amongst them that of a particularly amorous Prelate, the Bishop of Coire, whom she entirely dominated by her charms. Imperia made a great favour of granting him the interviews which he so much prized, a habit prompted not only by reasons of a general policy which she had found stood her in good stead, but also because at that time she herself had fallen into the snares of Venus, having been captivated by the good looks of a young Frenchman come to Constance in the suite of the Archbishop of Bordeaux. Every moment indeed which the fair one was not obliged to devote to admirers of supreme importance she passed with this young fellow, who, though poor as a church mouse, in consequence deemed himself richer than a king.

One evening when, according to her custom, she was entertaining this lover at supper, the couple

were startled by a great noise in the street outside, the reason of which was soon made clear by the entry of an agitated servant, who excitedly announced that the Bishop of Coire was without. The beauty was thoroughly annoyed. "Tell him," said she, "that I am ill with a high fever, and you will be telling no lie for (looking amorously at her swain) my brain is on fire from love." Just as she uttered these words the door flew open and the Bishop himself appeared, very ill-pleased to perceive an intruder. Blocking up the staircase behind was a numerous retinue, headed by officials, bearing presents—freshly caught trout from the Rhine on a golden platter and all sorts of dainties in richly ornamented boxes. "Ah, my little fellow," said he, glancing at the young man, "confessing ladies at this time of night is a rite reserved for Bishops alone, so, unless you wish to incur the penalty of excommunication, you had better be off." These words were anything but music in the ears of Imperia, and the thought of losing her lover threw her into a rage.

"Stop!" cried she. "Here in my house all men are equal, and he who disputes it shall soon find himself the sheath for some sword. You, my Lord Bishop, I know, love life too dearly to quarrel with me; sit down at the table and we will all

sup together." Though excessively annoyed, the Bishop, who was a prudent man, thought it best to comply, and the gifts he had brought having been set out, the curious supper began. Hardly, however, had the first mouthfuls been eaten when the sounds of a great cavalcade were heard in the street without, and a moment later the Cardinal of Ragusa, a man of great power and astuteness, stood at the door. Every one feared this ecclesiastic, who was supposed to stand a great chance of being elected Pope.

Looking round, the Cardinal at once grasped the situation, and realizing which of the two guests was the real lover, determined to get rid of him.

"Come here, my friend," said he, "I have a few words to say to you without."

The poor youth, after looking beseechingly at his mistress, thought it best to do as he was told, and in a moment found himself on the staircase outside, face to face with the redoubtable Cardinal, who, looking him straight in the eyes, said: "I am an old man and averse to revenge; besides, I have no wish to expend money in masses for the repose of your soul should you meet with the untimely fate which may possibly befall you; choose, therefore, will you have a rich abbey to-night, or stay with Madame and die to-morrow?"

The Frenchman, torn by conflicting passions, knew not what to do. "Perhaps," said he, "you will not mind my returning when you are gone?"

"The gallows or a mitre," said the astute Cardinal, thinking the while how costly the evening was likely to prove.

"An abbey with rich endowments, I suppose?"

"Yes," said the Cardinal, and smiling grimly, he drew from his robe a parchment which, having signed in an adjoining room, he handed to the delighted youth.

"As you are now an abbot," added he, producing a silken purse, "here are a hundred golden crowns to take you to France."

The lover of Imperia was now all smiles. "Monseigneur," said he, "to repay your generosity, may I give you a piece of good advice? As you well know, you will not get rid of the Bishop of Coire as easily as you have disposed of me, for he is a powerful prelate and already owns as many abbeys as there are taverns in this town. Every one in Constance is talking of the terrible pestilence now raging in Paris—tell him that you have just been soothing the last hours of an old friend stricken by this scourge." The Cardinal thanked the newly-made abbot and returned to the supper table, where he found Imperia in high dudgeon at the departure of

her lover, whose speedy end seemed to be foreshadowed in her angry look. The Cardinal noticed this with satisfaction, for he saw his abbey coming back again, and in consequence exhibited much geniality.

"A pleasant meeting indeed," said he to the Bishop; "it is well that we are rid of that little wretch, who might have been the death of all of us, including our peerless hostess."

"How?" excitedly inquired the Bishop, dropping his fork.

"As Madame, I think, knows, he is the secretary of the Bishop of Bordeaux, with whom he works all day. Alas! the poor man has just been stricken with the plague, as I well know, having but just left his bedside."

This was enough for the Bishop of Coire, who did not stop to hear any more. Darting out of the door without even saying good-bye to his hostess, he flew down the stairs as if the evil one was behind him.

The Cardinal, secretly chuckling over the success of his ruse, now promised himself a pleasant evening, but he was deceived, for Imperia, in a thoroughly bad temper, would have none of his blandishments, accusing him of wishing to communicate the contamination to her, and calling him an ecclesiastical idiot who wished to kill her first and canonize her

after. When he tried to explain that his story had been only a trick, she grew the more angry, and at last began to use threats, which made the Cardinal grave. Fired by passion, he ardently besought her to be less cruel, but she was in no mood to listen to any blandishments, and, when he attempted to take her round the waist, gave him a slap which made his bones rattle. Then, springing to her feet and drawing a dagger from her girdle, malediction flashed from her eyes, and she exclaimed—

"You were in error when you thought you could do as you liked; behold this poignard—a present from a king—make the semblance of a step towards me and I will use it to good effect."

So saying, she stooped down, and, drawing an imaginary circle on the floor, added—

"These are the confines of His Majesty's domains; let him who attempts to pass them look to himself."

These proceedings did not at all accord with the Cardinal's ideas of love-making, and he began to exercise all his crafty powers of diplomacy to allay her rage. Eventually he was successful, but, nevertheless, she absolutely refused to allow him to remain, adding with a smile that he might return on the morrow if he should not have been attacked by the plague. Threats, entreaties and prayers were

all in vain, and the Cardinal, in a furious mood, was at last compelled to take his departure. Alone in her sumptuous house the courtesan now felt thoroughly miserable. In one unfortunate hour she had upset the Bishop, offended the Cardinal, and lost her lover, upon whom all her rage was concentrated as the cowardly cause of much misfortune. Vowing that on the morrow she would see him burnt before her eyes, she began to devise all sorts of revengeful schemes.

The next minute, however, produced a joyous change, for, hearing a rustle in a corner of the room, she perceived the object of her denunciations emerging all smiles from behind a mirror, where he had managed to creep back unobserved. Taking a costly gold cup (one of the Bishop's presents) from the table, she filled it with wine, and, sinking upon her knees, proffered it to the young man, bidding him drink, then, rising to her feet and drawing him gently towards her, royally beautiful, her eyes aflame with joy, she murmured: "Now, little one, let us sup in peace."

A few days later, however, the Cardinal was once more admitted into the lady's favour. At first he was rather inclined to be resentful as to his dismissal, but the fair Imperia, who would have wheedled an angel and made him deny his faith,

soon made him think her of more importance than even his Cardinal's hat.

After the Council was over he was obliged to betake himself to Rome. He could not bear to leave his enchantress behind, and so he installed her in a magnificent palace, which he purchased in the "Eternal City," where she lived a good deal till a beautiful little daughter was born. Imperia, however, was not very pleased, and, declaring that she would no longer remain in such an unlucky place, set out once more upon what was little less than a Royal progress.

As this daughter grew up, she became more and more devout, and, having learnt of her mother's gay life, determined to atone for it by becoming a nun. Being, however, very beautiful, an attempt on her virtue (perpetrated, it is said, by Cardinal Pistrucci) prevented the execution of this resolve, for the poor girl, in defence of her honour, plunged a stiletto into her breast and fell dead at her assailant's feet. Though Imperia had seen little of her child when alive, this tragedy greatly affected her, and she at once set out for Rome in order to mourn over the victim. At this time, though no longer a young woman, she was in the zenith of her magnificent beauty, but the intense sorrow which had seized her produced a great change in her

disposition, and she let it be known that in future she should pursue a life of rigid virtue, which announcement caused great dismay to countless admirers, fearful that the object of their adoration was about to retire altogether from the world.

A number of gallants, who had sacrificed their estates in order to win her smiles in the tournament of love, fell into despair, and one great lord killed himself from grief at her unwillingness to receive his embraces, an occurrence which, to the astonishment of all, only made the fair one more sad. Nevertheless, it was remarked that she afterwards became less cruel. According to her own account, her confessor, having upbraided her as the cause of this death, she determined in future to accept any domains offered to her, and ease all amorous souls possessed of wealth, lest, by driving them to an untimely end, she should be accounted an accomplice in sending them to perdition. She was much commended for carrying out such a resolve, by which she saved the lives of many gallant gentlemen and accumulated great wealth.

After she had abandoned mourning, Imperia celebrated her return to the world of brilliant and unrestrained pleasure by a magnificent fête, at which Princes, Nobles, Cardinals, Ambassadors and other notabilities were numbered by the score.

Among the foreign envoys present on this occasion was a certain young French knight, a cadet of the noble family of l'Ile Adam—a youth of little fortune, but very handsome, who at once attracted the attention of his hostess, with the result that she proceeded to show him in an unmistakable way that he would be an acceptable lover. The young man's heart, however, was far away in France, where he had fallen in love with a beautiful young lady of noble birth, the daughter of Monsieur de Montmorency, who adored her handsome swain. For this reason the young Frenchman made little response to the overtures of Imperia, which indeed he scarcely noticed. The great courtesan, whose amorous nature was aroused, became much perturbed, and, perceiving the object of her desires about to go away without so much as bidding her adieu, did what many a Prince of those days would have given half his realm for—that is, sent a message of the most tender kind, begging the young man to return, as she had much to say to him alone. To make a long story short, l'Ile Adam was soon fascinated and forgot the troth he had plighted in France, while within a few days all Rome knew that the "Fair Imperia" had once more found a responsive lover. But this time her love was no passing fancy. L'Ile Adam

she openly declared was entirely different to all the other gallants she had known, for the more she fondled him, the more she desired to do so—life in its true sense had only begun for her at the moment when she had first known his embraces; as to the gay life she had once led, that was now definitely over for ever, which latter statement made a number of highly important personages look very gloomy.

Soon it was bruited about that a marriage would shortly ensue, and in the meantime Imperia entirely changed her mode of life. Falling at the feet of the Pope she obtained absolution for her sins, which favour, when accorded, she spoke of with gratitude, hoping that it might restore to her soul that virginity which, to her great grief, she was unable to offer to her lover. Before the celebration of the marriage she gave a great feast to which all her noble admirers were bidden. This was the occasion for much splendour and revelry, though there were many sad hearts among the guests, many of whom mourned for the melting hours and merry nights which were now about to end for ever.

The celebration of the marriage was splendid in the extreme, and it received the blessing of the Pope himself, who declared it was a fine thing to

see the foolish virgin returning to Heaven by such a road. Large sums were distributed to the poor and suffering of Rome, whilst several convents benefited very largely. Even those who had formerly held Imperia in horror admitted the marvellous change, and expressed themselves edified at conduct which betokened that the famous courtesan had now become a virtuous woman.

After the ceremony had been performed, the bride and bridegroom set out for France, being accompanied during the earlier portion of the journey by a band of knights in mourning equipment—an allusion to the loss which gallantry had sustained. Acclamations hailed the couple as they passed through the Italian towns, where in most of which they were welcomed by the reigning Prince —a fine tribute, as was said, to the triumph of virtue over vice. In Piedmont, splendid fêtes were held in honour of the success of the bridegroom in a duel with the Duke of Ferrara, a man of evil mind, who had presumed to sneer at l'Ile Adam, saying his great fortune had not cost him much! This gibe so bitterly affected his bride, that she at once gave up all the money she had received from lovers in her other days to decorate the dome of one of the churches at Florence. The only wealth she retained were certain sums pre-

sented to her from feelings of pure friendship; these, however, amounted to a very large figure: a great portion of her wealth being derived from gifts made by the head of the Holy Roman Empire. This Emperor became so incensed at the misconduct of the Italian Duke, that he sent a special envoy with a message to say that if l'Ile Adam and his wife should be received coldly by the French, he hoped they would settle in his dominions, where estates should be set aside for their enjoyment. The lovers sent back humble thanks to the Emperor, but declared that even should they be received with contumely, they were determined to end their days in France.

On their arrival in that country, l'Ile Adam settled close to his ancestral home, building himself a marvellous castle near Beaumont. The interior he adorned with a wonderful collection of works of art formed by his wife, who possessed superb taste. The statues, tapestries and pictures were renowned throughout the country for miles round, whilst the virtues of the châtelaine—an example, as many said, to queens—became the subject of general praise. The King himself came and stayed three days at the château, bestowing upon the owner many high dignities, including the title of Vicomte de Beaumont, afterwards giving him and his beauti-

ful wife a most cordial welcome at Court. Here, however, mischief-makers were soon at work, and one of these wretches contrived to impair the atmosphere of unclouded happiness which had hovered around the lovers ever since they left Rome. Talking with the Vicomtesse one day, a malicious courtier jokingly inquired whether her husband ever spoke of his first love—Mademoiselle de Montmorency, who, now twenty-two years old, had announced that she would always remain a maiden, for her heart had been broken by perfidy, and she could not banish the memory of her lost lover from her remembrance. The poor girl, he added, was now just about to take the veil and enter the convent of Chelles. The King also caused Beaumont much pain by saying: "Of course you will have no children"—a thoughtless remark, which the Vicomte recalled with further mortification a little time later when the death of his two nephews left the ancient house of Ile Adam entirely bereft of heirs except himself. His wife was now no longer very young, and there seemed to be no hope of any offspring—a state of affairs which eventually plunged her into great melancholy. Soon her husband, though he did his best to conceal it, became moody and thoughtful, whilst at times she detected him weeping for sorrow

at the thought that there was no fruit of their great love. So keenly did the Vicomtesse feel her sorrow that the very sight of a child made her nearly die of grief, for which reason her husband did all he could to keep any little ones from coming near her. Ever loving and considerate, he did all he could to dispel her melancholy, and made a point of speaking of the advantages of being childless. Children, he declared, were too often the source of grief and unhappiness; to begin with, so many turned out badly; and those who did not, like the sons of his brother, were apt to meet with an untimely fate. All this, however, did not for a moment deceive the poor woman, who sadly replied, that if only Heaven pleased to send her offspring, she would take good care that it should come to no harm. She sank into a state of great depression, and constantly declared that her lack of children was a punishment for the life she had formerly led. It seemed indeed a cruel irony of fate that she, who had once dreaded nothing so much as child-bearing, should now languish on account of not being able to bear her lord an heir. According to the fashion of the credulous age in which she lived, she now began to consult all sorts of people reputed to possess magical powers; amongst others seeking the advice of a celebrated Arabian physician who

was just then creating a sensation in Paris. He seems to have been an honest man, for he held out no hope of her desire being fulfilled, whereas many of the Parisian doctors encouraged the poor woman to continue hoping. At last, broken down by disappointment, she wrote to the Pope, laying her sorrows before him, and received in reply an edifying homily, in which it was set forth, that as faith alone could succeed where science failed, some salient act of devotion would be the surest path to the goal she sought. Accordingly the Vicomtesse set out with her husband, both barefoot, for a certain shrine, on her arrival at which they made a vow to build a magnificent cathedral, should a child be born; but all was in vain. Physically, though not spiritually, the Vicomtesse de Beaumont still remained the "Fair Imperia."

At last, convinced that her heart's desire would never be realized, the poor woman began to wish to die. Meanwhile, she and her husband were still like young lovers, and, not to give him pain, she hid such a design in the secret recesses of her heart, and assumed a gaiety which charmed him more than ever.

Just at that time a great deal of interest was aroused by the announcement that Mlle. de Montmorency was, at last, about to marry a noble of

great estates. The château in which this young lady lived was not very far from the Castle of Beaumont, and the Vicomtesse formed the resolve of going to see her. Accordingly, one day, when the Vicomte had gone hunting in the forest, his wife, with a small retinue of servants, set out on this expedition, and, gaining the presence of the girl whose betrothed she had married, found her as beautiful as herself—the most sincere compliment of which female nature is capable.

"I have come," said the saddened beauty, "to give you news of the highest importance, and I beg you will realize that selfish ends have not prompted my visit. Your forthcoming marriage is, I know, not of your own seeking, for you will ever continue to love my husband, even should you be forced into such a match. Listen to my words, then, and know that he whom you adored, and who was false to you only from having fallen into a snare, which, some say, not even an angel could have escaped, will be *free from the burden of his wife before the leaves have begun to fall.* Banish all idea of entering upon this marriage which has been arranged for you, and your constancy shall have its fitting reward in the arms of your first and only love.

"The Vicomte," added the Vicomtesse, "is the most noble of men. Pledge me your word to love

and cherish him, nor ever bring sorrow upon his ancient house, of which he is now the sole representative; and so shall my memory soon be erased from his mind."

The young lady, though at first disposed to doubt whether such words deserved serious attention, was prompted by inclination and hope emphatically to declare that nothing should make her marry before the close of the autumn, and, in spite of the opposition of her family, succeeded in having her way.

As the summer waned, the Vicomte and his wife betook themselves to Rome, and here in her gorgeous palace the Vicomtesse showed her husband more affection than ever, their life seeming like a perpetual honeymoon.

Strolling on the terraces one day, the Vicomtesse suddenly said to her husband—

"Do you never regret having married me? Truly it was a bad match for you! A lad like you of twenty-three—and I, a woman past her prime."

"Dearest," answered he, "as you know, my happiness is the envy of all. No younger woman can ever equal you, and should age come upon you, I shall never adore you the less. Even in the tomb you will be beautiful, and your skeleton worthy of love."

"You say I am lovely," replied his wife, "but

what am I beside Mademoiselle de Montmorency, whose radiance is like that of the sun?"

This speech brought tears into her husband's eyes, and he murmured that it was painful to hear her speak of the only real wrong he had ever committed in his life; and pronounce the name of one the very recollection of whom had long faded out of his mind.

Brushing aside a tear, his wife then said—

"Adored one, I have something grave to tell you. For a long time I have felt pains at my heart, and the Arabian, whose advice we sought, told me secretly that the end of my life may be at hand. Give me your oath, as a true knight, that if I die you will repair your fault and wed the girl you left for me."

Death—she went on to say—would, after all, be but a trifling punishment for the wild life she had once led; besides, she had always besought heaven to end her existence before the charms her husband loved should have been ravaged by the cruel hand of time.

Overcome by her sad words, Beaumont nearly fell to the ground, and could only murmur a few words of intense affection.

"Dear treasure of love," said he, "we will live tranquilly together for many a long day to come; I

will seek out cunning men of the East who shall give you back your youth and strength; 'tis but a passing weakness that has seized you."

Nevertheless, the Vicomtesse, as she said, was not to be by his side much longer.

Amongst the treasures which had been showered upon her was a ring—the gift of the Cardinal of Ragusa, who, as a favour, had obtained it from the famous Roman maker of poisons, the Signora Tophana.

Beneath a thin plating of gold was a tiny phial, which, when bitten, would liberate a poison producing instant death. This ring the Vicomtesse began to wear, and one autumn evening, when she and her husband sat in sweet communion gazing from one of the palace windows, having cast a glance of loving rapture into his eyes, she raised her fingers to her lips and let her amorous spirit take flight.

According to a request made long before, she was buried in the Church of St. Gregory beneath a marble slab bearing a simple epitaph. Her exact age at death has been a matter of dispute. Some have estimated it at forty-six, and others as little as twenty years younger. The latter estimate, however, is absurd. In all probability she was about thirty-five.

The doctors who were summoned said not a word

of the real cause of death, for the Vicomte was so affected, that the truth, they knew, would most likely be fatal for him to hear; and they were not wrong. In after years, when, in accordance with his solemn oath, he had married Mademoiselle de Montmorency, he learnt of the prediction which had caused his young bride to delay the match into which she had nearly been forced. From that day the poor man fell into a state of profound melancholy and slowly faded away, unable to banish the recollection of the beautiful woman who, in a heart where she had once reigned supreme, could never die.

III

The Influence of Love in shaping History—Its Connection with Feminine Domination generally Baneful—Woman, "Nature's most charming blunder," and her Ways—Alexander the Great—Francis I—La Belle Féronnière—Henri Quatre and his fifty-six Mistresses—Love at the Court of the Roi Soleil—A Cohort of Women rule France—Anecdotes and Adventures—Marie Antoinette and her injudicious Behaviour—George III and Hannah Lightfoot—the Lass of Richmond Hill—Maria Walpole and the Duke of Gloucester—Disastrous Effects of Feminine influence on Ruling Dynasties in Modern Times.

In the shaping of the world's history love has played a great part, and often helped to wreck empires and drag ruling dynasties to ruin.

Love is generally connected with feminine domination or influence, which in affairs of state has been almost without exception baneful. As a wife and mother woman for the most part exhibits qualities of the most admirable kind; when, however, she acquires undue ascendency over the minds of kings and rulers, the result is bound to be unfortunate.

To begin with, her peculiar mentality renders her profoundly incapable of appreciating the real facts of life. Perhaps harshly described as

"Nature's most charming blunder," she is too prone to be wilful and obstinate, whilst endowed with an unconquerable tendency to act upon impulse. We all know her faults in minor matters—nobly unselfish, she is ready to make any sacrifices, except some trifling one such as keeping quiet or abstaining from dwelling upon some particular subject, or doing some particular thing. As a rule she resents correction, and is rarely sensible enough to draw profit from experience.

Especially does she delight in confidences, which procure for her a twofold pleasure—the luxury of telling her troubles to a sympathetic listener, and speaking about herself (which is always highly interesting), whilst at the same time asking for advice which as a rule she does not follow—unless it is bad.

From a physical standpoint but poorly equipped for the rough battle of life, she is at times devious in her ways, a certain unprofitable and useless cunning being one of the favourite weapons in her armoury, though as long as passion does not prompt her to be otherwise, she can be straightforward enough.

Wilful often to the detriment of her own interests, she does foolish things merely because, as she will tell you, "she likes to do them." Admonish or correct her in any way out of accord with her preconceived ideas, and she will turn upon you and in a moment

change from the most lovable of creatures into the fiercest of fiends.

As man in general resembles the dog, so does woman possess much of the nature of the cat.

Man is at heart rough, not infrequently brutal, generally selfish, yet essentially a grateful animal, with certain qualities which can be relied upon. Woman, however gentle and caressing she may be, is but seldom dowered with mental stability, for which reason her influence in serious matters is of more than dubious value, producing wars and revolutions, shaking thrones, and bringing whole countries to ruin. Helen of Troy played havoc amongst the nations of ancient Greece, and Antony flung away the mastery of the world for Cleopatra. The veteran soldiers of Alexander the Great, whose glorious career came to such an untimely end, were right when they protested against their young leader's immoderate devotion to the fair sex, and taunted him with the cry, "Would you conquer the world with women?"

At a later date Francis I of France—the friend of Leonardo de Vinci—a king much devoted to gallantry, would have had a far more glorious reign had he not been easily influenced by the fair sex. Speaking of this monarch's foibles, a contemporary chronicler declared that his numerous amours hastened his death after feminine wiles had impaired

his intelligence. Francis I, added he, unlike wiser kings who busied themselves about ladies when no affairs of state were on hand, was always devoting his attention to women, and left serious matters to take care of themselves.

It may be added that the various legends as to the vengeance taken on this king by the outraged husband of one of his many mistresses—La Belle Féronnière—are based upon no solid historical foundation.

The name La Belle Féronnière was merely a *nom de guerre* assumed by a popular courtesan. Other appellations of a similar sort in favour with the frail sisterhood, were "La Belle Heaulmière" (of whom Villon sang), "La Chapperonnière," "L'Esperonnière," and many more.

Francis I, it would seem, did have some relations with one of these women, who as La Belle Féronnière has become a legendary figure, "the wife of an honest lawyer, Féron by name, who never forgave his monarch for capturing the affections of a loving wife." According to one story, the King was dying of consumption at Rambouillet. Féron in the disguise of a Capuchin monk forced his way to the bedside and bitterly upbraided the monarch for a life of debauchery which death produced by dissipation was about to end.

All this, however, is entirely untrue; its origin lies in the fact that the King did have an intrigue with the wife of a certain Lecoq, an advocate at the Parlement of Paris. This gentleman, however, seems to have been indisposed to create a scandal.

As a young man, Henri of Navarre was imbued with a certain romantic grace, which, in connection with his love of the fair sex, on one occasion impaired his qualities as a successful leader.

When but a landless king he sacrificed the victory of Coutras by turning aside to lay the captured standards of the enemy at the feet of Diane d'Audouins—known as La Belle Corisande—a beautiful creature who at that time held complete control of his heart.

According to a contemporary, Henri IV had no less than fifty-six mistresses, three of whom were nuns. The most romantic of his many love affairs was, of course, the liaison with the celebrated Gabrielle d'Estrées, about which so much has been written.

In connection with Henri IV it is only right to say that, if women exercised an unfavourable influence over him, he in his turn brought disaster upon several of those who attracted his fancy.

Three damsels are supposed to have come to an untimely end through him. The daughter of a gardener

[*To face p.* 78.

LOUISE RENÉE DE KEROUALLE, DUCHESS OF PORTSMOUTH.

(*Engraved by A. Blooteling after Sir Peter Lely.*)

at the Château of Nérac, who bore the appropriate name of Fleurette, after having for a time captivated the King was so broken-hearted at perceiving his love to be on the wane that, in a fit of desperation, she drowned herself. Another girl, Anne de Cambefort being of a more rigorously virtuous disposition, jumped out of a window to escape the marked attentions of the amorous monarch, and as the result received such serious injuries that she was lame to the end of her days. A more accommodating doctor's daughter, having been reproached by her parents for her complaisant behaviour, was so mortified that she eventually starved herself to death.

That merry monarch, Charles II, though Louis XIV sent Louise de Quérouaille over to England on what was virtually a secret political mission, seems to have been comparatively little influenced by his numerous loves in matters of state. Nell Gwynn, the winsome favourite whose glance was warm enough to set fire to the match of a musketeer, never seems to have meddled in politics, about which she probably did not trouble her pretty head. Curiously enough, in political matters, English women have never exerted the influence so disastrously wielded by their sisters in other parts of Europe—a proof of the common-sense of our nation,

which, it is to be hoped, will never be stifled by puling sentimentalism.

It was during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that feminine influence reached its apogee at the Court of Versailles, where a cohort of favourites, ranging from the infamous Montespan to the devout Maintenon, exerted a most pernicious domination over Louis Quatorze.

During the earlier portion of this reign a very easy morality prevailed; according to St. Simon, women of every kind were ever in the King's mind, and any one of them, no matter their age, rank or looks, could captivate him without difficulty, provided only they took care to feign a violent affection.

The younger nobles occasionally imported a note of variety into their immoralities by indulging in abductions. One of the most daring of these was the attempted carrying-off of a rich lady, Madame de Miramion, by the celebrated Bussy-Rabutin, a noted man of pleasure, Chief Commander of the Light Cavalry of France, born in 1618. This nobleman wrote a number of frivolous and rather scandalous books, the chief amongst them the *Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules*, by which he incurred the grave displeasure of Louis XIV, whom the volatile soldier lampooned under the title of Le Grand Alcandre! Although undoubtedly clever, Bussy-

Rabutin was eaten up by an inordinate conceit, and, as courtier, soldier, writer, and lover, thought himself easily first. He deemed himself braver than Turenne, and more gifted than Pascal!

The great wealth of Madame de Miramion appealed to the cupidity of the extravagant Comte, and he set about thinking how to capture such a rich prize. Eventually he resolved to abduct the lady, deeming that, once he had made himself master of her, no one would trouble to deprive him of her property. In short, he was determined to get by force what he could not have hoped for from friendship. No sooner had he made his plans than he proceeded to carry them out. Providing himself with relays of horses and carriages, he posted them on the road to Brie, with the intention of retiring with his capture to a fortified house belonging to one of his relatives. Madame de Miramion was rather a religious woman, and often went from St. Cloud on a sort of pilgrimage to Mont Valérien.[1] The Comte, lying in wait with his relatives and friends, stopped her carriage as it was on its way to this shrine, and then proceeded to make love to her. His tongue was glib enough, and it was not his

[1] This hill, on which a great fort now stands, was formerly renowned for a Calvary, to which religious Parisians flocked; the site is, I believe, still shown.

fault that he did not make her believe that she was under an obligation to him for his seizure of her person. Unluckily for him, however, she was not at all credulous—very much the reverse. She showered abuse on his head, and soon made him so angry that he abandoned his gentle way of speaking, and told her that, whether she consented to being abducted or not, she was in his power. At the same time, he made her get out of her carriage and into another, taking the road between St. Denis and Paris, so as to avoid the town. He believed he had arranged everything so well that he would reach a safe retreat before what had happened should have become known. To his great disgust, however, the carriage into which he had made her get broke down near the Bois de Boulogne, and it was two hours before it could be repaired.

This gave one of the lady's lackeys time to go and inform her friends of what had occurred.

The celebrated D'Artagnan, so well known to a later age by Dumas' stirring romance of *The Three Musketeers*, having got wind of the affair, is then supposed to have arrived upon the scene and played the part of rescuer, upon which Bussy-Rabutin, thinking discretion the better part of valour, left him in possession of the lady, to whom the musketeer at

once began to make violent love, without, however, the least success.

It may be added that the shock Madame de Miramion sustained owing to Bussy-Rabutin's attempted abduction was the cause of her devoting her life to charity. During the time of the troubles in Paris she sold her necklace, valued at 24,000 livres, and her plate, and gave the proceeds of the sale to the poor. She founded several charities for women, and died in 1696, at the age of sixty-six. L'Abbé de Choisy wrote a curious life of her.

A somewhat similar and equally unsuccessful affair occurred in England some years later. This was the attempted abduction of the famous actress, Mrs. Bracegirdle, by Captain Hill and the infamous Lord Mohun. The more plebeian of the two scoundrels, conceiving himself to be in love with the charming actress, falsely attributed her coldness to the existence of a rival, and fixed, with the blind pertinacity of a mole, upon Mr. Mountford. Backed by his noble friend, this rascal Captain commenced by attempting an abduction, assisted by a number of soldiers, in which they endeavoured to force her into a coach, where sat my Lord Mohun, armed with seven or eight pistols. Their scheme was, however, foiled by old Mrs. Bracegirdle, who clung to her daughter with all the tenacity of fear and

affection ; her friends, and afterwards the passengers, having overcome their alarm of "My Lord" and his pistols, stepped in, and at last succeeded in rescuing the lady, who contrived to reach her home in Howard Street, "My Lord" and the Captain following. After knocking at the door several times, they sent to a tavern for wine, and marched up and down before the house with drawn swords, in defiance of the constables and a watch, who, after inquiring their names, with a becoming respect for a man of his lordship's rank, withdrew. Then came poor Mr. Mountford, who ventured upon remonstrance, and the valorous Captain ran him through the body before he had time to draw his sword in self-defence. Both of the scoundrels escaped; Lord Mohun though arrested and tried, was acquitted.

Rochester, it will be remembered, when scarcely more than a lad, was more successful in carrying off a young heiress, Elizabeth Mellet, whom De Grammont calls "la triste héritière." One night after supping at Whitehall with Miss Stuart, the young Elizabeth was returning home with her grandfather, Lord Haly, when their coach was suddenly stopped near Charing Cross by a number of bravoes, who lifted the affrighted girl out of the carriage and placed her in one which had six horses; they then set off for Uxbridge, and were overtaken; but the

outrage ended in marriage, and Elizabeth became the unhappy, neglected Countess of Rochester.

From his most youthful days Louis XIV seems to have been familiarized with scenes of love; but as a youth he manifested none of those libertine tendencies for which in late years he became renowned.

His first real love seems to have been Olympe de Mancini—a niece of the famous Cardinal. With this attractive though not very beautiful young girl his relations appear to have been nothing more than a frank good-comradeship tinged with real affection. Inheriting, however, something of the family shrewdness, the object of the Royal love did not scruple to accept the offer of marriage made by Prince Eugène of Savoy, better known as the Comte de Soissons—an alliance entailing definite and substantial benefits being more to her taste than any shadowy chance of becoming Queen of France or perhaps being offered the not very dignified position of Royal favourite.

When fifteen years old the King entered upon his first liaison, the lady honoured by his attentions being a certain Madame de Beauvais, a veteran in the fields of gallantry who was possessed of a temperament of fire. This lady it was who, according to the Duchesse d'Orleans, first taught the young monarch "comment il faut agir avec les femmes." She seems to have been well fitted for this task, having led a most irregu-

lar life. The nickname of this amiable instructress, it should be added, was Cateau "La Borgnesse"—an allusion to her infirmity, for in addition to being old she was also one-eyed.

After a course of amorous study with La Beauvais, the youthful King had little left to learn, and according to several capable authorities was quite fitted to give lessons in the arts of love at that time in such vogue at the French Court.

During the early and middle portions of the reign of Louis Quatorze a very easy morality prevailed at Versailles, and the King himself, as is well known, had a number of favourite mistresses in addition to not a few passing fancies. Of all the fair ones who captivated the Grand Monarque, his liaison with Mlle. de La Vallière is generally accounted to have been the most romantic. Many writers have written pathetically of the fate of this unfortunate girl. Nevertheless, it is not so certain that La Vallière was in reality really beautiful. Olivier d'Ormesson, who saw her in her best days at St. Germain, declares that she did not seem to him even pretty. Though she had fine eyes and a good complexion, her face, according to him, was too long, whilst her mouth and teeth were ugly and the end of her nose thick. Altogether he appears to have been much disillusioned as to the physical attractions of the famous beauty. It is, of

course, a well-authenticated historical fact that she had a slight limp ; but this, according to contemporary evidence, rather increased her attractions.

In his amours with La Vallière, Louis Quatorze made considerable use of the services of the great Colbert, who, according to modern ideas, does not seem to have played a very dignified part. It was, however, a lax age, and its standards of conduct cannot be judged by those of to-day. At one time the King used to show himself in public with his wife and two mistresses—the three queens, as they were called. The spectacle of the ruler of France driving in his state carriage accompanied by his Queen, La Vallière and La Montespan, does not seem to have occasioned any very serious protest or scandal. The final cause of the rupture between the King and La Vallière was the birth of her third son—the Comte de Vermandois—after whose appearance in the world her charms, which even before had been on the wane, almost entirely disappeared, little beauty remaining to captivate an already wearied lover. It was with regard to the death of this child some years later, when the discarded and repentant favourite had retired from the world, that she uttered the somewhat dignified and pathetic words : "Alas! when I have finished weeping for his birth, I will think of bewailing his death."

Everything in the France of that day began and ended in song; and the retirement to a convent of La Vallière was no exception, for the following ribald stanzas were hawked about Paris.

"On dit que La Vallière
S'en va sur son declin;
Ce n'est que par manière
Que le Roi suit son train.
Montespan prend sa place,
Il faut que tout y passe
Ainsi, de main en main."

Leading a loose life himself, Louis XIV not unnaturally liked loose people. Buckingham, who had treated his wife badly and lived openly with Lady Shrewsbury, was a great favourite with this King, who called him the only English gentleman he had ever seen.

The Princess of Orange, however, who held a different opinion, gave the dissolute Duke a good rap over the knuckles at an interview at the Hague, where he was diplomatically trying to convince her of England's love for her country.

"We do not," said he, "treat Holland as a mistress, we love her as a wife." "Vraiment," replied the Princess, "je crois que vous nous aimez comme vous aimez la vôtre!"

When the ascendency of Madame de Montespan over Louis Quatorze was drawing to a close, much

gossiping took place at Court about a lady-in-waiting attached to Madame, who, it is said, would be the next Royal mistress. This was Mlle. de Fontanges, maliciously described by her detractors as "belle comme un ange, sotte comme un panier."

The King was not long in hearing of the new arrival, and his curiosity was at once aroused. Determined, however, no longer to play the part of lover, he instructed the Prince de Marcillac to act as intermediary, and to him was entrusted the high honour of presenting the lady with a string of pearls and a pair of very valuable ear-rings, tokens of the King's wish to make her close acquaintance.

When the King first made the acquaintance of Mlle. de Fontanges he formed the opinion that she was not of a very designing nature. "Voilà," said he, "un loup qui ne me mangera pas." Several of his fair favourites had almost frightened him by their rapacity, and as he grew older a certain amount of calculated caution was imported into his intrigues. When, for instance, one of his courtiers spoke in highly eulogistic terms of the charms of a certain great lady, the King pulled him up short saying it would cost too much to get rid of her.

The fortress of Mlle. de Fontanges' virtue, it should be added, was by no means impregnable—indeed, it was said that she had come to Court with the

express object of making her fortune. Nevertheless, probably from reasons of policy, the young lady did not yield without a struggle, and stipulated as an essential condition that she should be the sole possessor of her monarch's heart—a poor return, some one said, for the kindness of Madame de Montespan, who had first shown her to the King, and thus, as it were, placed her foot in the stirrup. Though no definite arrangement was made, Mlle. de Fontanges was soon recognized as occupying the post of chief Sultana, which very naturally caused her more elderly rival the greatest mortification. Indeed, the death some months later in childbirth of the new favourite was by not a few thought to have been caused by poison administered by the woman she had displaced. Louis Quatorze was evidently acquainted with these rumours, for he gave orders that the body was not to be opened; nevertheless, an autopsy did take place, the record of which has been preserved and shows that the lady died a natural death. Such was also the opinion of Madame de Sévigné, who declared that the sole cause of the favourite's untimely end was bearing a child to the King, her witty epitaph upon the poor mother being, "Morte au service du Roi."

Mlle. de Fontanges, it should be added, seems to

have entertained some real feelings of affection for Louis, who was then in his prime. It is said that long before she came to Court she was convinced that she would become the reigning favourite at Versailles owing to a strange dream, the meaning of which had been explained to her by an old Capuchin friar. In this dream she had found herself on the summit of a high mountain where she was enveloped by clouds of dazzling radiance, which of a sudden gave way to a profound obscurity, which caused her to awake. The friar being told of this bade her take care, for the mountain signified the French Court where a triumph of but short duration awaited her. "If," said he, "you abandon God, you will be abandoned by Him, and fall into eternal darkness." The latter portion of what he said was, however, soon forgotten amidst the pomp and splendour of Versailles, only to be remembered when the shades of death were closing around her to whom they had been addressed.

Though there was a great deal of ceremonious politeness and refinement of phrase amongst the French nobility of those days, many of the great ladies were exceedingly businesslike in their methods. An instance of this was the behaviour of the Duchesse de Noailles towards Cardinal Fleury, whom before he had become the chief Minister of

Louis XV she treated with disdain. Being desperately in love with her he felt this keenly.

After his change of fortunes the Duchesse at once changed her note, and coming to the Cardinal besought him to use his influence in her favour. "You seem to forget," said he, "that you were formerly very harsh towards me." "Ah, Monseigneur," replied the lady with considerable naïveté, "whoever could have foreseen your rise?"

The mistresses of the French Kings were almost without exception grasping and rapacious, laying their dainty hands upon everything they could, and indulging in reckless extravagance whilst the common people starved.

An exception was La Pompadour, the last king's mistress worthy of the name, whose stately magnificence and encouragement of the arts render her worthy of a place amongst the great women of history. She at least knew how to live and how to die—for when death came she dressed herself in brave attire and met the grim destroyer with a smile.

Nevertheless, from a political point of view her influence was bad. Most pernicious of all was the "Du Barry," who, pandering to every caprice of Louis Quinze, certainly contributed to prepare France for that Revolution which the follies of Marie Antoinette largely caused.

. Long before the storm of the Revolution had broken, the "Austrian," as her enemies called the Queen, had rendered herself unpopular by a real or supposed lack of sympathy with the French people, in addition to which her behaviour, which was certainly unthinking and frivolous, originated much unfavourable comment.

Her partiality for favourites who thought merely of pandering to her love of amusement—chief amongst whom was the Duchesse de Polignac—and her overwhelming love of pleasure alienated the sympathy of the more serious portion of the noblesse, who perceived the abyss towards which their order was being led.

The Queen's attendance at masked balls with her brother-in-law the Comte d'Artois, who loaded her with attentions (the chief of which was the building of Bagatelle in six weeks in order to gratify a whim), did not fail to occasion scandal; nevertheless there is no valid evidence that her relations with that Prince ever exceeded the bounds of propriety. The one romance of Marie Antoinette's career which it is possible was not purely platonic was her intimacy with the handsome Fersen, who without doubt was devoted to her heart and soul. Unfortunately, certain portions of his correspondence which would have cleared up the question of whether there was ever a real liaison have been destroyed.

It is, however, well known that some believed him to have been the father of the unfortunate Louis XVII, around whose fate so much mystery has clung.

During the Revolution the voice of scandal allotted several lovers to Marie Antoinette, but such rumours were nothing but the basest of calumnies. Flirtations the Queen may have had—for instance, there is the story of the young Englishman, Conway, who danced perpetually with her at a ball. Having grown very hot, the Queen, sitting by his side, said, "How my heart beats!"; then taking his hand she made as if to let him feel its beating, but the young man drew it gently away. "Et il a bien fait," said the King with a significant look when the incident was reported to him.

Besides openly indulging in frivolity, and carelessly extravagant, Marie Antoinette did not increase her popularity by luxuriously simulating village life at the beautiful "Little Trianon," the spot in all France which she loved the best.

According to a picturesque legend, upon each anniversary of the fateful day on which she left her beloved Trianon to be escorted to Paris by a howling mob, the Queen revisits[1] the grounds, whilst

[1] See as to this the curious experiences of two English ladies, set forth with many interesting details in a small volume, *An Adventure*, published this year.

simultaneously the *perron* and gardens are peopled by those who lived there in the long dead past, all the occupations and amusements of another age being reproduced.

The intriguing habits of the sex found an endless field just before the storm broke and anterior to the great excesses which horrified Europe. Whilst the Revolution was still confined to opinions, the exaggerated sentiments of the women both for and against the popular cause did much harm to the parties they espoused. Female vanity and self-importance ran riot in particular in Royalist circles, and the last efforts of many great ladies were employed in influencing men to oppose inevitable reforms.

Our Hanoverian sovereigns, though not indifferent to the charms of the fair sex, have been little influenced by feminine wiles.

George III, however, according to what seems to be reliable evidence, in his love affair, when Heir Apparent, with Hannah Lightfoot, the Fair Quaker, became so enthralled by her charms that his guardians were glad to find a husband for her in the person of a young grocer, Isaac Axford of Ludgate Hill.

Hannah, born in 1730, was the daughter of a Wapping shoemaker, at whose death she was adopted by an uncle, Henry Wheeler, a linendraper

at the corner of St. James's Market, demolished during the making of Regent Street.

The Prince of Wales seems to have fallen in love with her at first sight, when eight years her junior, and, according to supposition, was the unknown person who went through a marriage ceremony with her in 1756 at Curzon Street Chapel, Mayfair, Edward, Duke of York being present; for which marriage, the bridegroom not being of their faith Hannah was expelled from the Society of Friends.

The couple are supposed to have maintained their connection for about thirteen years, and for a time to have lived in a suburb of London, where Hannah had a son, created Sir Samuel Parks by Act of Parliament. A certain George Rex, a devoted Royalist, who went to America, and another George Rex, living at the Cape in 1830, were also reputed to have been their children.

The author himself has met individuals who, he was assured, were descendants of the Prince and the fair Quakeress.

According to some the famous song, "The Lass of Richmond Hill," was suggested by this love affair.

> "I'd crowns resign to call her mine,
> Sweet lass of Richmond Hill."

The Duke of Gloucester, favourite brother of

George, was of a more ardently amorous disposition, for he actually went so far as to marry the illegitimate child of a work-girl who had become the mistress of Sir Edward Walpole.

Sir Edward, second son of Sir Robert, as a handsome and clever young man had overcome the scruples of Mary Clement, an apprentice in the shop of a Pall Mall tailor, Rennie by name.

Mary was the admiration of all the bucks of that day, amongst whom Sir Edward alone was triumphant in making her wife in all but name. He loved his beautiful mistress and had five children by her, all of whom rose to social distinction.

Horace, their uncle of letter-writing fame, was particularly proud of the three girls, his beautiful nieces, and loved to make them welcome at Strawberry Hill, where he romped with them and made their girlhood pleasant.

All of the three married well. Laura, the eldest, captivated a brother of Lord Albemarle, a clergyman, who, in later years, became a Bishop. Her uncle was delighted and wrote, "I have forgot to tell you of a wedding in our family; my brother's eldest daughter is to be married to-morrow to Lord Albemarle's brother, a Canon of Windsor. We are very happy with the match. The bride is very agreeable, sensible and good, though not so hand-

some, perhaps, as her sisters. . . . The second, Marie, is beauty itself. Her face, bloom, eyes, teeth and person are all perfect. You may imagine how charming she is when I tell you that her only fault, if one must find one, is that her face is rather too round. She has a great deal of wit and vivacity, with perfect modesty."

Charlotte, the youngest of the three, married Lord Huntingtower, afterwards fourth Earl of Dysart. Her courtship is described in a characteristic letter from Strawberry Hill. "My brother's last daughter, Charlotte, is married; and though their story is too short for a romance, it will make a pretty novel—nay, it is almost brief enough for a play, coming very nearly within the space of twenty-four hours. The young lord has liked her for some time; on Saturday se'nnight he came to my brother and made his demand. Edward said, in answer, he would never force the inclinations of his children. He did not believe his daughter, Charlotte, had any attachment; but she might have. He would send for her and know her mind.

"She was with her sister Marie, to whom she said very sensibly, 'If I were but nineteen, I would refuse point-blank, for I don't like to be married in a week to a man I never saw. But I am two-and-twenty; some people say I am handsome, but

I believe the truth is that I am likely to be at large and to go off soon. It is dangerous to refuse so great a match.' Take notice of the words, 'married in a week.' The love that was so many months in ripening could not stay above a week. She came and saw the impetuous lover, and I believe she was glad that she had not 'refused point-blank,' for they were married last Thursday."

The youngest, Mary, was of an ambitious disposition, and, as a child in short petticoats, startled her father by saying, "Some day I mean to be a grand lady." "Rubbish, child," said he, "that is impossible; for you are only a beggar, and it is just as well that you should know it." "Then," retorted the little girl with a saucy toss of her head, "I'll be a lady beggar."

Growing up she married James, Earl of Waldegrave, Knight of the Garter, Privy Councillor, and Governor to the Prince of Wales—a peer old enough to have been her father. However, her married life with him did not last long, for four years after her nuptials, just after the birth of her last child, the Earl was struck down by smallpox, and in spite of the care of his wife, who nursed him with a tender devotion and a heroic disregard of danger, died.

Lady Waldegrave was now left a rich widow

with three little girls, and many noble suitors were at her feet, amongst them the Duke of Portland, whom she refused. She did not, however, betray the same sternness with regard to William Henry, Duke of Gloucester, then a boy of nineteen full of the unreasoning passion of youth, which made him declare that he loved her more than life itself.

The marriage was kept a profound secret; but the Duke's devotion to the fair Countess was so marked as to attract universal attention. Not only was he always at her side, but her servants wore a semi-royal livery, whilst gentlemen of his household escorted her to her carriage with the deference usually paid to a Princess.

At length, when the Duchess was about to bear a child, her royal husband wrote to his brother the King, announcing his marriage to Lady Waldegrave, and begged him to send officers of State to attend her accouchement, and thus recognize her rank as a Princess of the Blood. George III was furious, and denounced the marriage as a "highly disgraceful step," and according to report lay awake all night weeping.

He sent no answer to the letter; and only when William Henry as a last resource threatened to appeal to the House of Lords, despatched the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor,

and other high officials to wait upon the Duke and Duchess in order to report to him on the legality of the marriage. The most important piece of evidence given was that of the Bishop of Exeter, who testified that when a Marriage Bill was brought in he had thought it right to question Lady Waldegrave, then on a visit to his Deanery. "I went to her room," he added, "and, telling her my reasons for inquiring, I asked whether she was married. She burst into a flood of tears, and cried, 'I am—I am married'; and then, falling into a great agony, she wrung her hands and exclaimed, 'Good God! what have I done? I have betrayed the Duke, and broken my promise to him!'"

Eventually the King accorded a reluctant recognition of the marriage a few hours before the Duchess gave birth to a son.

Once recognized, the Duchess's ambition, which was her prevailing passion, was not long smothered. A Royal Princess, she held levées which were thronged by all the aristocracy of England; and for a few brilliant years Mary Walpole had her fill of pomp, adulation, and power. Her husband, however, proved but a fickle lover, and after a few years of devotion fell a victim to the charms of Lady Almeria Carpenter, one of the loveliest women of the time. Though the Duchess did her best to

lure him back to her side, he continued unfaithful, with the result that his wife eventually obtained a legal separation, and passed the remaining years of her life in retirement and unostentatious charity. She died August 23, 1807, two years after the Duke, and was borne to her last resting-place in the Chapel of St. George at Windsor, amidst the tears of many women and children whose homes she had brightened and whose sorrows she had relieved.

Her three daughters by her first marriage became respectively Countess Waldegrave, Duchess of Grafton, and Lady Hugh Seymour. They are known to history by the famous pictures of the three Lady Waldegraves which have so often been reproduced. Her two children by the Duke of Gloucester were Prince William Frederick, Duke of Gloucester, who married his cousin, Princess Mary, daughter of George III, and the Princess Sophia, who died unmarried in 1844.

In quite modern times disaster has continued to follow the sway of woman. Ludwig II of Bavaria lost his throne owing to his infatuation for Lola Montez, according to the elder Dumas the evil genius of every one who cared for her. Isabella II the grandmother of the present King of Spain, set her country in a blaze of revolt; and Draga, Queen

of Servia, whose sensual spell gave her a complete ascendency over the ill-fated Alexander, by her injudicious influence wrought the downfall of the Obrenovitch dynasty. Less striking, though equally disastrous, was the influence of the Empress Eugénie during the Second Empire, to the stability of which she contributed little. On this subject, however, it would be unchivalrous to dwell, for the Empress, a survivor of another age, still lives in dignified quiet and seclusion, cherishing the memory of a gallant son, and dreaming over again the great Imperial dream which relentless destiny so ruthlessly dispelled.

IV

Love the Favourite Pastime of the French Noblesse—Loose Morality under the *Ancien Régime*—Jacques Casanova de Seingalt the Friend of Frederick the Great and Voltaire—His Curious Career and Amours—The Marquis De Sade, a Shakespeare of Erotic Fancy—Scandalous Adventure at his *Petit Maison*—Criminal Escapade at Marseilles—His Devoted Wife—Liberated from the Bastille becomes Popular with Revolutionary Leaders—Napoleon decrees that he should be incarcerated for an Indefinite Time—Last days of De Sade at Charenton—His Admiration for Théroigne de Méricourt

Love as it was understood by the French Noblesse of the *ancien régime* was, in a vast number of cases, a mere pastime of an agreeable and pleasant kind just suited to their lazy and luxurious lives. Almost every fashionable gallant boasted of some attachment and few made any pretence of being faithful to their own wives. The queer upside-down morality, or rather immorality, of that age is well indicated by a remark made by the lover of the Duchesse d'Ollonne. Quite shocked at perceiving that she coquetted with her own husband, he exclaimed: "This is too much. I should never have believed that a woman could have behaved so badly!" Marriage indeed in French society of the

eighteenth century was, as said a philosopher of the day, little but a recognized indecency.

The grand seigneurs of the *ancien régime*, though often utterly lacking in morality, were not ungenerous as regards the many illegitimate children which were born to them by their mistresses. As a rule these were left with their mothers, who received good allowances.

A new arrival in Paris going to call upon a famous star of the opera—Mlle. Le Fel, a woman who enjoyed the greatest popularity and was a member of the Académie Royale de Musique—found her playing with three charming children whom she told him she adored.

The visitor praised their beauty but could not help commenting upon its marked diversity of type. "You need not be surprised at that," replied the actress, quite unperturbed. "The eldest is the son of the Duc d'Annecy; the second of the Comte d'Egmont, and the youngest owes his existence to the Marquis de Maisonrouge, who you will have heard has just been married."

"I beg your pardon for having taken you for the mother of all three, it was a stupid mistake."

"You were quite right," rejoined Mlle. Le Fel, "they are my children"—at which she burst out laughing, being, as she said, much amused at the

simplicity of her visitor, to whom she proceeded to explain her contempt for prejudices which she deemed beneath consideration.

As a matter of fact the vast majority of French actresses of the eighteenth century were totally indifferent to morality as it is understood in Anglo-Saxon countries. An observer well able to express a reliable opinion as to the virtue of these ladies said: "elles se piquent de ne point en avoir et se moquent de ceux qui leur en supposent."

Pleasure was the main and practically the sole object of existence for most of Parisian society of that day; and numbers of beautiful women only thought themselves happy when they were making others so.

Even the highest noblesse welcomed any one likely to be amusing, and clever adventurers of fertile imaginations and facile speech were accorded a toleration of an extraordinary kind.

The history of some of these men—Cagliostro, for instance—was entirely unknown: according to the accounts which most of them gave, they came of noble descent. This was probably believed by few, but as long as such charlatans pandered to the pleasure of society, not many awkward questions were asked.

The prince of all these adventurers was Jacques

Casanova de Seingalt, an extraordinary Venetian much given to gallantry, whose memoirs, abounding in historical reminiscence (the main portion of which has now been proved to be true), though familiar to most persons of real education, are spoken of with bated breath in England, where any one publishing a translation would certainly be severely punished.

So much for Anglo-Saxon culture and love of history! with the exception of an admirable essay by Mr. Charles Whibley, little in English has been written of this prince of adventurers, who during his long and chequered career came into contact with so many notable figures of his age.

Amongst these were Fox, to whom at some gaming tables he once lent money, and Frederick William of Prussia, who, no doubt regretting that the tall Venetian could not be enlisted among his famous grenadiers, called him a "très bel homme."

Whilst at Geneva he saw a good deal of Voltaire, with whom he had several discussions. The great writer, like a true philosopher, kept an excellent cook, and had a horror of publishers, against whom he warned Casanova.

Like most men of pleasure the latter adored France, and in his old age bitterly lamented the downfall of the old aristocratic system under which he had met so many pleasant people.

This, however, is not the place to enter into any detailed account of the varied society into which this most interesting of characters gained admission (largely, no doubt, by reason of his celebrated escape from the prisons of the Piombi at Venice). Suffice it to say that with kings, princes, philosophers, gamblers and courtesans he was ever completely at his ease.

Amongst the various cities he visited, London was least to his taste; he knew little English and did not understand its ways. Nor were the ladies very much to his liking, though he pays a high tribute to their good looks.

According to a modern English story, Casanova is supposed to have met the celebrated Kitty Fisher in some public gardens of the metropolis, and, charmed by her beauty, to have fervently exclaimed in broken English, "I love you!"

The real story told without bowdlerization is a good deal less romantic.

Spending the evening with a friend at a house of doubtful repute, Casanova says he was shown the celebrated courtesan whom he calls "Kety Fisher" —she was awaiting the arrival of a certain Duke about to take her to a ball.

This Phryne (as he terms her) was magnificently dressed, wearing diamonds which without exaggera-

tion were worth 500,000 francs. Nevertheless, it was explained to Casanova that for ten guineas he might profit by the Duke's unpunctuality, but though he thought Kitty Fisher charming he did not seize the opportunity. She spoke only English; and Casanova, accustomed, as he says, to take pleasure in all his senses at the same time, felt that the lack of understanding what she said would impair the delights of any amorous tête-à-tête, and so he chose instead an Irish girl who could speak some French.

As D'Artagnan is the type of the romantic gallant, so Casanova is remembered as the typical libertine adventurer of the eighteenth century.

In spite, however, of this unsavoury reputation, it is impossible to deny that this extraordinary man, besides possessing considerable intellect and learning, also had a kind heart—the most disreputable of the amorous exploits which occupy so much of his *Memoirs* are probably in a great degree exaggerations; for on the subject of love Casanova was unable to bridle his tongue or stop his pen from running away in extravagant flights of fancy.

In appearance Casanova was of gigantic stature —very dark, and with piercing eyes which gave him a rather ferocious air. Easily thrown into a passion, he laughed little himself, though very much

given to making others laugh. In this, as in other of his ways, he resembled Figaro, the famous barber of Seville. A most agreeable companion and a man of much originality and cleverness, he knew everything except the things he pretended to know—dancing, French grammar, general good taste, and the ways of the great world. In many things he was paradox itself, but the general effect seems to have pleasantly impressed most of the many celebrated people who met him. As a writer, however, he was strangely unequal—his comedies were the only unamusing productions of his pen, just as his works on philosophy, unlike his other writings, were totally unphilosophical.

A born sceptic, he seemed to believe in nothing except that which was unbelievable, whilst highly superstitious about a great number of things. It must be added that his mind, as can be seen from his *Memoirs*, was in an extraordinary degree dominated by woman, who played a great part in his adventurous life. He possessed many qualities to attract a sex of which he was passionately fond. Women liked him, for during his life he had undergone many wonderful and interesting experiences, which together with a prodigious imagination and an unquenchable vivacity ever made him a delightful companion. The numerous parts he had played

—his travels and adventures throughout Europe—the shifts and stratagems which intermittent periods of poverty had so often compelled him to employ, had fashioned him into a rare and unique character, well worthy, as said the Prince de Ligne, of the consideration and friendship of the very small number of persons who found favour in the old adventurer's eyes during the last years of his life, passed as librarian to the Comte de Waldstein at the Château of Dux.

As an old man Casanova was often querulous and eccentric, but the noble patron, who had taken a great fancy to the aged adventurer and thoroughly understood his ways, was extremely lenient to his many faults and complaints whilst generally humouring his whims. In his last years Casanova became much given to lamenting the past. He spoke continually of the days of his vanished youth, and still maintained a number of the ways and fashions of sixty years before; when he entered a room, for instance, he would bow low after the style taught by the famous dancing-master Marcel about the middle of the eighteenth century, the costume of which period the old man still occasionally wore. The members of the household of the Comte he denounced as Jacobins—men who ought to be sent to the right-about and were not fit to associate

with him, "Casanova"—a man who had run the greatest general in all Poland through the body.

The story of this adventure was worth listening to. Returning from Russia on one occasion he chanced to make a halt at Warsaw, where, being presented to the king, Stanislas Augustus, and having greatly pleased him by his agreeable conversation, Casanova for a time became quite an arbiter of fashion and in such a capacity especially busied himself with the Italian Opera, which as a man of taste he took as it were under his protection—deciding matters under dispute—criticizing, blaming and sometimes praising as was ever his way, whilst taking good care to keep himself well to the front.

At that time the great Polish General Branicki happened to be the devoted admirer of one of the female stars whose voice and methods provoked the very outspoken comment of the excitable Venetian. Annoyed at the lady's incompetence the latter hissed her performance, after which according to his wont he betook himself to the dressing-room of another fair one who was more to his taste. Here engaged in amorous dalliance the uncompromising critic was run to ground by the infatuated and furious General, who swore, raved, and stormed in terrible fashion. Casanova, however, said not a word, but merely casting a look of rage at the General, went to bed.

The next morning Branicki had forgotten all about the incident. What then was his surprise to receive a strange, alternately threatening and obsequious note from Casanova, the impertinence of which was so amusing that it merely excited laughter.

Considering that this extraordinary missive was not worth a reply, the General having tossed it on one side dismissed the whole affair from his mind. Soon after, however, a second note—this time a serious challenge—arrived. Branicki, though a man fond of pleasure, was also fond of fighting, which he much preferred to troubling himself about letters, for which reason he merely sent word to Casanova that he would see him at the theatre. Here the two men met, and, after the customary salutations, Branicki, perceiving that Casanova was in earnest, said, "It is all very well to talk about fighting, but are you of sufficient rank to meet me?" "I am more than that," was the reply. "Anyhow, I will wager," retorted the General, "that you have never fought before." "Never, your Excellency." "Then," inquired Branicki, "why the devil do you begin with me?"

"Because," replied Casanova, "you are the first who has insulted me."

"It seems to me," persisted the General, "that this matter might be arranged." "With any one else than yourself, in a moment," was the answer.

"As a general rule," continued Branicki, "I am not in the habit of avoiding these sort of affairs, but I confess that in your case—" "I understand you," interrupted Casanova, "but precisely because this duel will redound more to my credit than to yours I am determined upon it."

It was now clear that a duel must be fought, and the discussion turned to choice of weapons. "Frankly," said the good-natured General, "you do not appear to me to be an expert—we Poles are very clever with the sword, whilst I warn you that I am an excellent pistol shot." "Never mind," rejoined Casanova, "luck sometimes equalizes things."

Eventually Branicki having insisted upon lending Casanova his pistols, nine o'clock next morning was fixed as the time for the duel, and at that hour both combatants arrived on the ground. The General, as a great Polish magnate, arrived in a carriage-and-six surrounded by aides-de-camp, pages, huntsmen and uhlans. Having left his carriage he addressed Casanova, and asked him whether the last word had really been spoken. "It has," was the reply. Then said Branicki, "I will load these pistols before your eyes—they are by a celebrated maker." "I will try them upon the head of your Excellency," was his antagonist's reply.

At a given signal the duellists fired and the General

fell shot in the body. Severely wounded he turned with difficulty towards Casanova and tossed him a thousand ducats, saying "Save yourself. The King who is fond of me will be your enemy. I think I am dying."

Meanwhile the General's aides-de-camp and lancers were about to cut down the Venetian, but were deterred by their chivalrous master, who in a feeble voice cried out, "Stop, you cowards!" It is pleasant to learn that the gallant Branicki eventually recovered. Casanova, it should be added, was also wounded in this duel, having been shot through the left hand, which, however, he concealed in his pocket in order that the Poles should not have the gratification of knowing that he had been touched.

Another characteristic instance of Casanova's original bent of mind was shown at Nuremberg, when arriving at the gates of the town he suddenly conceived the idea of adding the somewhat patrician appellation of de Seingalt to his name. As he said, he wished to make himself into a gentleman without being in debt to any sovereign in Europe. Being, however, well known, the consequence of the act was immediate arrest. "What is the meaning of this false name?" demanded the Burgomaster.

"It is not false," retorted Casanova; "on the contrary, it is a perfectly true one, since it is of my own

creation, and belongs to me; for I made it and gave it to myself. I never said that I was not Casanova."

"What right have you to bear this additional name?"

"The right given by the alphabet to every man who knows how to read. And now, by what authority do you bear your name? Your grandfather or great-grandfather chose eight or ten letters which as a matter of fact outrage the drums of my ears: I, on the other hand, have chosen eight, the sound of which is pleasing to me. What have you got to say to that?" The Burgomaster reluctantly confessed that there was no way of withstanding such reasoning, and, convinced that Casanova was a man best left alone, let him depart in peace.

Though Casanova is generally considered as having been the typical debauchee, this celebrated Venetian adventurer was in all probability not very much more immoral than numbers of so-called serious men who have gone down to history as models of decorous behaviour. The real difference between him and them having been that, whilst he was possessed by a veritable mania for boasting of his amorous exploits and conquests, they did all they could to conceal the failings in which the majority of male humanity is prone to indulge.

Casanova, indeed, was never a heartless libertine,

far from it. True is it that he wrote very freely of subjects which Anglo-Saxon opinion conspires to ignore, and was for ever vaunting his powers as an all-victorious lover. His swans, however, were notoriously known to have a tendency to dwindle into geese on investigation, and a great number of those intrigues in which his *Memoirs* abound were in all probability little more than commonplace liaisons with ladies who intermittently followed what has been aptly called the most ancient profession in the world. There is, indeed, little doubt but what a large proportion of the fortresses to which he laid assault were only too anxious to be captured.

Though addicted to facile loves he was by no means an unromantic man, at all events in his youth. The woman whom he appears really to have loved at that happy period, as he called it, was Madame Lebel, one of the ten or a dozen ladies to whom he referred in terms of real tenderness. Madame Lebel, according to the old adventurer, had possessed everything necessary to have been a companion for life, had providence willed him to taste the felicity of a sympathetic union, instead of decreeing that he should be fettered by an independence which he confessed amounted to a sort of slavery. "Ah," he used to lament in his latter days, "had I only been married to a woman clever enough to direct and subject me,

without letting me perceive my subjection, I should have looked after my affairs, had children, and not been, as I am, alone in the world possessed of nothing."

A striking proof that Casanova was no callous debauchee is afforded by his behaviour as a young man in Germany. Travelling through the country his carriage met with an accident, and after the hospitable fashion of that day he was welcomed by a Baron whose château happened to be close to the scene of the mishap. This Baron had two very pretty daughters, who at once conceived a great fancy for the dashing adventurer—one of them, indeed, became so attached to her tutor (Casanova repaid his host's hospitality by giving his children lessons) that she did all she could to induce him to marry her, whilst the other overwhelmed him with professions of ardent love. Animated, however, by a true spirit of gentlemanly chivalry, Casanova made a surreptitious departure from his most pleasant retreat, being unwilling—as says the Prince de Ligne—to corrupt the one or lower the other by an unequal match. Years later the good-natured adventurer returned to find to his delight that his virtuous pupil had married a most excellent and clever young man, whilst her sister whose proposals had been of an even more voluptuous nature was also married to a man

of her choice, who however, she frankly declared, did not attract her as much as the gallant Venetian had done.

With a girl whom he calls Henriette, Casanova for a time was perfectly happy—he declares, indeed, that she was in perfect sympathy with him, and there was not even a crumpled rose-leaf to interrupt their beatitude. Henriette was a cultivated creature, fond of music, and permeated by a gentle optimistic philosophy rare amongst women. Though well-read and clever, she made no pretence of being a blue-stocking, and whenever she spoke seriously on any subject (which she could do very well), took care to invest her words with a veneer of frivolity, smiling in a manner which could not fail to please.

Another serious love affair which made a real impression upon Casanova's susceptible heart was his intrigue with the mysterious M.M., whose exact identity is never revealed in the *Memoirs*.

Like the famous old "Q." Casanova lived to admire the granddaughters of some of his ancient loves. The last pages of his *Memoirs*, for instance, recount his meeting at Trieste with a lady he calls Irene—herself a daughter of an old flame of his, the pseudo Countess Rinaldi.

Casanova had had a liaison with Irene at Milan eleven years before. He declared it ended owing to

the bad behaviour of her father, but on meeting her again he still appears to have experienced some feeling of admiration. She was at this time on the stage, having run away from her parents with an actor whom she had married. She was now faithful to her husband, but supplemented her earnings by equivocal gaming. Every evening, after the theatre was over, she gave a supper party generally attended by a number of young men attracted by her charms, on which occasions the entertainment would conclude with Faro—the hostess taking the bank. Casanova, going to sup there one evening, was astounded to observe that his old love had developed a great faculty for cheating, and he afterwards taxed her with it. At first she emphatically denied that her invariable good fortune was owing to anything but luck, which very much annoyed the old adventurer, who, as one who had gambled all his life, was of all men in the world best able to understand such matters.

Casanova died in 1803, aged 78, at Vienna. In that city shortly before his death the grandfather[1] of the present writer had an interview with the old adventurer, who had then grown very testy and irritable.

[1] Lord Walpole, then in the diplomatic service—eight or nine years later (in 1811) *chargé d'affaires* in St. Petersburg.

Lord Walpole was of fiery temper, and no wonder the two very nearly quarrelled! In his last hours Casanova softened, and his mind wandered back to his vivacious youth in which he always declared he had been so happy. As far as can be ascertained, he talked incessantly of his beloved Venice, the conquest of which by the French had been a sad blow to him, and described the former glories of that ancient and superb city, which for so many centuries had resisted the domination of both Europe and Asia.

As the time of his dissolution approached, he exhibited great calm and seemed to regret life but little. Having received the sacraments of the Church, he said: "I call every one to witness that I have lived as a philosopher and die as a Christian" —and so one of the most original characters who ever lived passed away.

In spite of many faults the old adventurer was a type more worthy of consideration than the young French nobles, who at the epoch immediately preceding the Revolution indulged in such unrestrained licence as to carry their vicious pleasures to a pitch not far removed from crime.

The memory of most of these debauchees has sunk into a deserved oblivion, but one of them still enjoys an infamous fame which has made his name

a synonym for all that is vile. This is the notorious Marquis de Sade, who with some justice has been termed the Shakespeare of erotic fancy.

The Marquis intellectually was a son, but a degenerate son, of the philosophy of the eighteenth century—of that philosophy which seemed to aim at discussing everything, denying everything, with the result that intoxicated by success and incapable in the fever of the fight of making its blows proportionate and of choosing its victims, it finally destroyed many moral, fruitful, and necessary ideas.

Justine, a book against religion and against authority, is the culmination of all these destructive theories, the ignoble storehouse where they have been collected and classified, where they appear exaggerated, caricatured, carried to an extreme limit, but still easy to recognize. This and its companion volume, *Juliette*, are justly considered to be the most abominable works which the human mind ever conceived or the human hand ever committed to paper. The first edition of *Justine*, in two volumes, appeared in 1791, embellished with a frontispiece by Chéry. It was published in Holland. A list of the subsequent editions reaching down to the present day it would be unnecessary to give; suffice it to say that the number is by no means small. *Le Philosophe dans le Boudoir, ou les Instituteurs*

Libertins, generally attributed to De Sade, is said to have been written by another hand.

Imitators of his erotic style abounded at the close of the eighteenth century, amongst them was Restif de Bretonne, who in 1798 published a small novel illustrated with sixty plates, which is now exceedingly rare. This was *L'Anti-Justine, ou les Délices de l'Amour*. The author's name was given as M. Linguet, a gentleman who, having been guillotined three or four years before, could make no protest.

Only six copies of this book are now known to exist, of which three (incomplete) are in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris. In 1802 Bonaparte, then First Consul, whilst ordering that this and other free books should be seized and destroyed, gave instructions that two copies of each should be preserved under lock and key in the great National Library of France.

The publisher of most of the works of the Marquis was Girouard, a zealous Royalist, who was arrested during the trial of Louis XVI for publishing pamphlets of a reactionary nature.

A dramatic incident occurred on the day when his sentence was pronounced. His sister, Mlle. Girouard, a nun, was present, and hearing her brother condemned to death, courageously rose and demanded to be allowed to share her brother's fate.

An unsuccessful effort being made to get her to leave the court, she became even more violent, denouncing the judges and crying "Vive le Roi"; for this the infamous Fouquier-Tinville sentenced her to death. She went to the scaffold with great courage.

The Marquis de Sade first saw the light at the magnificent mansion of the Condé family in Paris, on June 2, 1740.

Connected by birth with this noble line, one of his ancestors had been Hughes de Sade, the husband of Petrarch's Laura; the traditions of his family were honourable in the extreme. Paul de Sade, Bishop of Marseilles, had been the first President of the "Parlement de Provence"; Jean de Sade had rendered such services to the Emperor Sigismund, that the Imperial Eagle had been added to his arms; whilst François Paul de Sade, Abbé d'Uxeuil, an amiable ecclesiastic, had been the author of a well-known work on Petrarch, which achieved no mean measure of success. Soldiers, sailors, divines and ecclesiastics of unblemished fame had borne the patronymic which later generations have learnt to associate with an almost insane mentality.

As a young man, De Sade served as a subaltern in the regiment "du Roy," his reputation as a

mauvais sujet rendering him, according to a contemporary, highly popular with the ladies. At the age of twenty-three, however, he relinquished the career of arms to fill the post of "Lieutenant-Général de la Haute et Basse-Bresse" which his father had held and now handed over to him. An extremely eligible young bachelor, De Sade was now made welcome in all the most exclusive salons of Paris, and in one of these it was that he made the acquaintance of two charming young girls, Mlles. Renée-Pélagie, and Louise, de Montreuil, to the elder of whom he was married on May 17, 1763, at the church of St. Roch. It should be added that De Sade was really in love with the younger of the two girls, but owing to the representations of their mother, the Marquis (whose conduct, as always, had been disgraceful) was compelled to espouse the elder, who adored her unworthy husband during the whole of his very agitated career.

A few weeks after this marriage the bridegroom seems to have got into trouble whilst amusing himself in the neighbourhood of Paris, and was as a consequence imprisoned in the castle of Vincennes, from which fortress he was, however, soon extricated by the efforts of his wife. During the four years which followed, though indulging in occasional dissipation, no open scandal seems to have occurred;

his wife bore him a son in 1767, and the young couple appeared to have entered upon an unbroken epoch of prosperous ease.

A great feature of the life of pleasure then led by so many French nobles at that time, was what was called a *petite maison*, a luxurious private retreat for the most part located in the environs of Paris. Every *grand seigneur*, every great financier, every wealthy bourgeois—almost without exception—possessed one or even more of these abodes of pleasure which in the vast majority of instances were nests of illicit love.

Not a few, indeed, like the Maréchal Duc de Richelieu, owned as many *petites maisons* as he had intrigues, in his case, at any rate, a considerable number. In such luxurious resorts of love were given suppers, generally the occasion for much unrestrained pleasure, and often for debauchery. Such gatherings were not confined to young gallants alone, many of the guests were old men who had grown grey beneath the harness of Venus and still lived for nothing else but pleasure.

Ladies also occasionally possessed discreet retreats. The celebrated Madame de Genlis, for instance—authoress of *Les Annales de la Vertu*—owned a little house in the Rue des Amandiers, which was tastefully constructed in the form of a little Greek

temple, and here it was she received the Chevalier Gluck, Buffon and a number of literary friends. Madame de Genlis, principally remembered in England as a famous blue-stocking, was the subject of numberless scandalous stories in her own country. The conversation having one day turned upon the writings of this lady before the witty Marquis de Bièvre, he said, "Yes, amongst her other literary achievements she has certainly succeeded in her imitations of Pope." "You are wrong, I think," interposed some one. "Not at all," rejoined the Marquis; "all Paris knows that she has perpetrated many an *essay upon man.*"

The majority of these *petites maisons*, whilst externally of an unassuming and rustic appearance, contained rooms which were marvels of luxury and elegance. As a rule, a house of this kind was approached by a narrow passage, the grounds being surrounded by high walls, like those of a small farm—indeed, many a miniature palace was dissimulated beneath the rustic roof of a humble homestead. Such cunningly devised pleasure retreats were, in many cases, the creations of celebrated architects, whilst great artists like Boucher, Doyen, and Fragonard adorned the interior with their voluptuous paintings, so admirably fitted to harmonize with the delicate woodwork of the walls. The rooms,

though small, were finely proportioned, so as to set off to perfection the works of art, most of which dealt with the joys of life and love. The principal apartment in such an abode of pleasure was usually the dining-room, opening upon a carefully tended garden, whilst not infrequently rising and descending tables enabled the host and his guests to dine without servants being present, a kitchen being immediately beneath—the boudoir and a sumptuous bathroom and bedroom were decorated in the style of the period with elaborately painted ceilings and swags of flowers and fruit.

As may be imagined, the Marquis de Sade, whose disposition had in no wise been sobered by matrimony, owned one of these *petites maisons*, which he reserved for illicit pleasure, at Arcueil.

Here, one April evening in 1768, he took a girl called Rose Keller, who became so terrified at what she saw there that she ran out of the house and made a scandal which reverberated throughout Paris, soon to ring with execrations against De Sade.

According to the account[1] she gave, having persuaded her to accompany him to Arcueil, he had there caused her to be stripped and tied upon a dis-

[1] The version of this affair given by Restif de la Bretonne is totally inaccurate. Accordingly to him Rose Keller was a perfectly respectable woman, who went to the house at Arcueil in the hopes of earning her living as a concierge there.

secting-table before a number of persons. He had then made a speech, declaring that he was now about to unveil some of the secrets of human structure by the careful dissection of a woman, "of no good to the world in general." The real truth of Rose Keller's story was never ascertained; according to her own statement she had only escaped with her life by bursting her bonds and screaming so loudly for help, that she was allowed to jump out of the window unmolested. In any case, there is no doubt that she was found in the street in a state of complete nudity, and very much frightened. In all probability De Sade had no intention of harming the girl—he was very fond of indulging in exceedingly unpleasant jokes, and the proceedings which so terrified her would appear to have been nothing worse than a coarse and rather cruel mystification. Expecting to find an amorous swain, she was confronted with an individual posing as a torturer of an insane kind. Also, it is likely that the woman made as much of the affair as possible in order to obtain some pecuniary compensation. Be this as it may the Marquis was made to pay the girl a hundred louis, and was shut up in the prison of Pierre Encise at Lyons for six weeks; at the end of this time, however, his wife and her family, as in a previous instance, procured his liberation.

Public attention was much exercised as to the true history of the outrage, about which the Marquise de Deffand wrote several letters to Horace Walpole. The exact circumstances seem never to have been ascertained, but there is no doubt that De Sade had behaved in a disgraceful manner.

The Marquise, though quite a young bride, and horrified by her husband's love of dissipation, exercised great forbearance, and showed herself most loving and devoted, whilst seeking by the exercise of much tenderness and charm to strengthen those bonds which marriage had forged. She was ready to make any sacrifice to gain her husband's constancy and real affection, but her efforts were vain.

In a short time the incorrigible Marquis contracted a liaison with his sister-in-law, who, as has been before said, had always greatly attracted him. His adventure at Arcueil had necessitated a retirement to the country house of his wife's family, and being there brought into close proximity with Louise de Montreuil, the two soon became lovers. In addition to this, he proceeded to indulge in a disgraceful escapade. Tiring of country life, De Sade went for a few days to Marseilles, where he gave a ball which was the talk of the neighbourhood for years after. To his jaded fancy the provincials appeared lacking in vivacity; and, desirous of impart-

[*To face p.* 130.

THE MARQUISE DE SADE.

(*From a scarce print.*)

ing a liveliness into their proceedings, he contrived that some attractive sweets served at the supper should contain a quantity of a certain tasteless drug, which produced such an effect upon even the most respectable and serious of the guests, that the evening ended in a frenzied orgy.

The Marquis himself, after having watched his handiwork with much amusement, peacefully returned home, where his wife, who would appear to have been of a most forgiving nature, was delighted to receive him.

The saturnalia which the Marquis had induced created a tremendous sensation.

Restif de la Bretonne, sometimes called a plebeian Balzac of the eighteenth century, who was a personal enemy of De Sade, has told, in *Les Nuits de Paris*, the story of the drugged sweets, while shifting the scene of the outrage to Paris, and adding a number of dramatic details of a purely imaginary kind.

Public opinion was inflamed beyond all bounds, and De Sade, who began to realize that the affair was no joke, fled, accompanied by his valet. The latter, it should be added, was a man of much the same character as his master; indeed he had assisted in contriving the demoralization of the visitors to the ball. Both master and man were condemned to death by the Parlement of Aix, which, on

September 11, 1772, denounced the couple as being worse than poisoners. The fugitives were eventually caught and thrown prisoners into the Citadel of Miolans. The Marquis was then passing under the name of the Comte de Mazan, an appellation which his family entreated the Governor to allow him to retain during his detention, in order to avoid scandal. At the same time they joined with the Marquise de Sade in appeals that her husband might be treated with as little severity as possible, and that his comfort and safety might be assured till such time as what they somewhat leniently termed "cette malheureuse affaire" had been forgotten. M. de Launay, the Commandant of Miolans, appears to have been quite ready to fall in with their views, for he at once provided a comfortable and well-furnished room for his prisoner, whom he placed upon his written parole. Notwithstanding that such a captivity could not present many terrors, and was also likely to have a salutary effect upon the future conduct of her husband, the Marquise (who appears to have borne not the slightest resentment towards him) a short time later organized a band of fifteen armed men, who, in conjunction with certain bribed soldiers of the garrison, managed to secure De Sade's escape, as a consequence of which the Commandant lost his post.

The one consolation left to the unfortunate soldier was a letter of apology from De Sade, in which the latter said that he must candidly confess that the only thing which spoilt his pleasure in escaping was the thought that such a proceeding might injure the Commandant's prospects. He did not fail to add that he should be ready at any time to say a good word for M. de Launay to his superiors, and concluded by thanking that gentleman for his courteous and gentlemanlike behaviour.

Flying to Geneva, the Marquis, as had been arranged, there met his wife, whom he found overwhelmed with joy at her husband's newly gained freedom. High influences were invoked, with the result that the sentence passed by the Parlement of Aix was quashed, and De Sade, once more a free man, was once again at liberty to recommence the habitual career of criminal folly which soon caused his reincarceration within prison walls.

Near the Château de la Coste in Provence, which belonged to the Marquis, lived a Mlle. de Rousset, a lady who, though no longer young, was not unattractive. It was her way to declare that she was ugly, but like most women who make such a statement, she did not believe it.

Though virtuous enough, Mlle. de Rousset was no prude, and made no pretence of running

counter to the spirit of an age in which excessive modesty was considered more inexcusable than vice itself. Consequently she took a lenient view of the escapades of the Marquis, who, after having at first made unsuccessful love to her, became a platonic friend.

In 1778, when De Sade had been relegated to prison in the Castle of Vincennes, this lady became the intimate friend and confidante of his wife, who, overcome with grief, was always bewailing the misfortunes of her worthless husband. Mlle. de Rousset did all she could to console the poor woman, and accompanied her on expeditions to purchase luxuries for the prisoner. She also managed the affairs of the estate in Provence and corresponded with the steward, a great scoundrel according to his master. At the same time she undertook the task of trying to bring into accord a woman who loved too much and a man who loved too little, urging the latter in her letters to reform his conduct and appreciate the devotion of his wife.

Mlle. de Rousset seems to have aroused in De Sade the only creditable affections which brightened the sullied page of his misspent life. Some of her letters were full of good sense.

"Women in general," she wrote, "are frank. Which of you complain of it, gentlemen? Only

the Marquis de Sade does not want his wife to say to him 'I am your second self.' Yet such a sentiment is very charming and delightful: if I had a lover or a husband, I should like him to say it to me a hundred times a day. . . .

"You need have no cause for jealousy of my music master" (she was learning the guitar). "He is a gentleman with sound opinions, most virtuous, more remarkable for good feeling than for wit, a good soul, and amusing; we see little of him, because his work does not allow him to come often. I begged him to give a few lessons to help us to pass the time. Busy with writing or what not, I like to hear Madame sol-fa-ing. . . . At least I am sure then that she is not bored.

"As you are of a jealous temperament, I will be very careful; but God forbid that you should ever have the slightest liking for me! I would lead you a terrible dance! You risk nothing, do you, and you congratulate yourself on that? Well, I warn you to be on the defensive; ugly women are cleverer than pretty ones. You have always seen me scolding; moralizing continuously, only laughing when far from you. On reversing the picture, you will see a sweeter physiognomy, not without charm, and a certain roguish bearing which kills men without rousing their suspicions; you will fall into my net."

Eventually, however, the relations between the Marquis and Mlle. de Rousset, owing to the constant exchange of letters, became less innocent. When, however, the Marquise de Sade discovered this, according to her wont she showed a most forgiving equanimity.

Nevertheless, finding some compromising correspondence, she remonstrated with the lady, who seems to have been seized with remorse and once more returned to her old rôle of platonic counsellor. She died in 1782 whilst De Sade was still in prison.

In 1781 the unfortunate Marquise, who in spite of all his misdeeds continued to adore her husband, appears to have tired of a world in which she had found little but trouble, for she retired to the convent of St. Aure. Nevertheless, from time to time she went to see her husband in the prison of Vincennes, on which occasions he never failed to abuse the poor woman ; indeed, more than once the officials were obliged to curb his violence.

About 1784 he was transferred to the Bastille, where as usual his wife continued her visits, on every occasion bringing some delicacy or luxury which might alleviate a captivity which already was far too luxurious. At this time the Marquis wrote a great deal, and produced his novel of *Aline et Valcour, ou le Roman Philosophique.*

There now appears to have been a general agreement that De Sade was better in prison than out, for we find no further attempts on the part of his family to obtain his liberation, though, as has been said, his wife did everything possible to alleviate his not very rigorous imprisonment.

The Bastille was at this period almost entirely reserved as a place of detention for dissipated or spendthrift members of the noblesse, who, often kept there by the wish of their relations, were thus prevented from ruining themselves or others connected with them ; it had indeed become a highly beneficent institution, which, notwithstanding the denunciations of revolutionary orators, did not in any way affect the people in general, who nevertheless regarded it as a symbol of tyranny and despotism. In 1789, when the first murmurs of revolt were beginning to be heard outside the walls of the old fortress, the prisoners within began to become unruly and mutinous. The worst insubordinate of all was, of course, the Marquis, who, after assaulting the sentinels, contrived to scream out of a window to the mob without, that "the prisoners were being massacred by their guards, who were butchers of the worst description."

As a consequence of this he was transferred to the hospital at Charenton, which then, as now, sheltered a number of mentally afflicted individuals.

Here he remained till liberated by a decree of the Committee of Public Safety in 1790. His first act, on once more attaining his freedom, was to take advantage of the new Revolutionary Law, and divorce his long-suffering and faithful wife, who at this time seems at last to have become cured of her affection for her unnatural husband, his ill-treatment having killed her love.

Withdrawing for ever from the world, and, freed from all illusions, she now sought consolation in religion.

She died at her château d'Echauffour in 1810, her last years being spent in expiating, by fervent piety, the misdeeds of the man she had once adored.

It might have been imagined that De Sade, whose vices were essentially those of a pampered aristocrat, would have deplored the destruction of the order to which he himself had been such a discredit—the very opposite was the case.

Curiously enough, he seems to have disliked the old régime under which he had been so leniently treated, for he joined with the greatest fervour in the revolutionary movement which was convulsing Paris. Notwithstanding the fact that his sumptuous château of Lacoste was destroyed by peasants in 1790 (when, it is said, a number of instruments of torture used by him in his horrible orgies were brought to light), he

greeted the downfall of the French Monarchy with enthusiastic delight. The section known as "La Section des Piques" even elected him its secretary, and a quatrain composed by him was inscribed upon a bust of Marat, which after that monster's death was placed in the Committee-room. It ran thus—

"Du vrai républicain unique et chère idole,
De ta perte, Marat, ton image console;
Qui chérit un si grand homme adopte ses vertus,
Les couches de Scévole ont fait naître Brutus."

In September 1792, on the occasion of a festival in honour of the departed patriots Marat and Le Pelletier, which had been organized by the Section des Piques, the ci-devant Marquis made a speech which excited enormous enthusiasm.

"The most sacred duty," said he, "of truly republican hearts is the gratitude due to great men. From such a sacred rite spring all the virtues necessary to the maintenance and glory of the State. . . . Marat! Le Pelletier! The voice of centuries to come will but augment the homage which the present generation accords you. Sublime martyrs of liberty, already installed in the temple of memory, it is there that ever revered by humanity you will preside over it like the beneficent stars which give light to the world."

In a number of his ideas De Sade was the

precursor of the modern humanitarian. The enemy of priests and kings his sympathies were always with the criminal against his judge. He also denounced war as being worse than cannibalism, whilst never failing to express his love for a proletariat about which he knew nothing.

This revolutionary fervour procured for the writer a toleration not extended to other nobles of more edifying life, and the ci-devant Marquis remained quite unmolested up till December 1793. He was said, indeed, to be about the only marquis whom Robespierre and Fouquier-Tinville did not wish to see executed. The well-deserved incarcerations which he had undergone were cited as evidences of Royalist persecution, and it was pointed out that an individual who had been in such constant trouble under the old régime could not fail to be sincere in his acclamations of the new one which seemed likely to leave him at liberty.

At this time De Sade was living in the Rue Pot de Fer, where he entertained numbers of visitors in his sumptuously furnished rooms, which he shared with a young woman of very aristocratic appearance, supposed to be the daughter of some fugitive noble. This lady, whose face usually wore a somewhat sad expression, was called Justine by the Marquis, but only when intimate friends were present.

A great number of persons connected with the theatrical world were visitors at the Rue Pot de Fer, and in due course some of the plays written by De Sade during his detention at the Bastille were produced, amongst them *Oxtiern, ou les Malheurs du Libertinage*, at the Théâtre Molière, in November 1791, and *Le Misanthrope par Amour, ou Sophie et Desfrancs*, at the Comédie Française, in 1790.

The Marquis himself was a good actor, and frequently took part in little plays given at his own house, in which he usually assumed the rôle of a lover. This period seems to have been about the most peaceful portion of a singularly agitated career, for no wild irregularities are recorded as having disturbed the life of the little household.

At the end of 1793 De Sade, however, was once more in trouble, his aristocratic connections bringing him under suspicion. Denounced as a reactionary, he was shut up in the prison of the Madelonettes, transferred to that of the Carmes, and finally incarcerated in that of Picpus. He was, however, once more liberated, in 1794, after which he enjoyed a long spell of freedom which lasted up to the year 1801. Little is known of his life during this period, but it is probable that the greater part of his time was devoted to dissipation and to the writing of

some of those scandalous books which have rendered his name infamous for all time.

In 1801 he once more attracted much attention, an anonymous pamphlet of a most violent nature, entitled *Zoloé et ses Deux Acolytes*, being, with justice, attributed to his pen. In this, Madame Bonaparte (Zoloé) was bitterly attacked, whilst Napoleon himself was roughly handled under the name of d'Orsec. Barras (Sabar), Madame Tallien (Laureda), the Comte de Beauharnais (Barmont) were also mentioned in the squib, the main theme of which was the constant and mischievous orgies to which all the characters were supposed to be addicted.

Napoleon was not the man to support being lampooned by the pen of a De Sade, and on March 5, 1801, the Marquis was arrested and thrown once more into prison, which he only left when, on April 26, 1803, he was declared insane and transferred to the asylum at Charenton. At the time of his arrest the order was given "d'oublier pour longtemps le prisonnier dans la maison de St. Pélagie," but, on reflection, Bonaparte appears to have thought it more convenient to dispose of the Marquis for ever by officially declaring him to be mad, which was accordingly done.

At that time there existed in France a special class of lunatics called "fous d'État," that is to

say, people who were declared mad because they attacked or worried the Government. The poet Désorgues, for instance, having aired Republican views during the First Empire, and composed a song about the Emperor which ended—

"Oui, le grand Napoléon
Est un grand caméléon,"

the authorities at once assumed that he was insane, and sent him to the asylum at Charenton, where he remained till he died in 1808. In 1801 the Abbé Fournier, after preaching some sermons which displeased the first Consul, was shut up at Bicêtre as a lunatic; liberated, however, in 1804 he appears to have convinced Napoleon of his complete sanity, becoming one of his chaplains, and Bishop of Montpellier in 1806.

The asylum at Charenton, where the Marquis was confined was, it should be added, not at all an unpleasant institution of its kind. The organization was good, and the rooms well kept, whilst healthy diet and a capable staff of attendants ensured the well-being of the inmates who were allowed to indulge in games and dancing.

The director was a M. Coulmiers, a very clever man and a good administrator, though fond of keeping in with the ruling powers and despotic with those under his charge. The authoritative

methods of this functionary did not at first suit De Sade, who for a time was in revolt against him. Eventually, however, the director treated him with great leniency because he found in the Marquis an admirable organizer of the theatricals which he considered beneficial to the lunatics in the asylum.

During the early part of the confinement of De Sade at Charenton, he seems to have behaved fairly well, but in 1808 his conduct became so outrageous that the chief physician found it necessary to address a memorandum to the Minister of Police, in which he protested against the Marquis remaining under his charge.

After setting forth that there was in the institution over which he presided an individual whose audacious libertinage had unfortunately rendered him only too famous—the author of the infamous novel *Justine*—he proceeded to add that the Marquis was certainly not mad, his only mania being that of demoralizing every one he came across by propagating his horrible doctrine of unlimited licence. Owing to his powers of ingratiating himself with the Governor, De Sade had organized theatrical representations which were acted by the patients, he himself being director and author of the plays, whilst taking a prominent part in receiving the visitors invited on such occasions. The doctor

objected very much to these performances which he wished to see forbidden, whilst urging that the Marquis should be shut up in some remote fortress where he could find no one to demoralize.

The Minister of Police, in answer to this appeal, decided to transfer the subject of it to the fortress of Ham, but the Governor of Charenton, with whom De Sade was on excellent terms (and in whose honour he had composed much eulogistic verse for recitation on public occasions), interfered, and the incorrigible Marquis continued to remain in the Asylum till December 1814, when he died, aged seventy-five years.

The theatrical entertainments which were his especial delight were suppressed a year previous to this, the protest of the doctor having at last carried the day.

Little is known of the last days of the old libertine, except that his existence, thanks to his friendship with those in high places, was comfortable in the extreme. His favourite amusement was highly characteristic of a curiously perverted and depraved mind. On fine days he would sit on a stool by the side of a fœtid gutter which carried off all the filth and rubbish of the Asylum, into which, laughing with delight, he would throw, one by one, quantities of the finest roses which money could procure. Being

well equipped with funds, he was generally surrounded by several baskets of these beautiful flowers, which it pleased him to see, drifting soiled and filthy, into the common sewer.

A noted phrenologist, it may be added, having been entrusted with the skull of the Marquis, but not told whose it had been, after a careful examination announced that its most salient characteristics were bumps of platonic love and maternal tenderness.

Whilst the Marquise de Sade was, for many years at least, ardently in love with her husband, there does not appear to be any reason for thinking that this dissolute and ungrateful man was ever truly enamoured of any one at all. For one woman, however, he is said during his last years to have professed a feeling of great devotion and respect. During the incarceration of De Sade at the Asylum of Charenton he was accorded many privileges, amongst others he dined constantly with the Director who treated him so well. At one of these dinners, a visitor being present, the conversation having turned upon love, the Marquis stated that the only woman who had ever aroused a real passion in his breast was the famous (or rather the infamous) Théroigne de Méricourt,[1] she whom Lamartine called "the

[1] A courtesan who as a young woman was known as "la belle Liégeoise." During the Revolution she became the leader of a

impure Joan of Arc of the market-place." The old satyr afterwards indulged in the most extravagant praises of this obscene virago, whom he proceeded to class amongst the heroines of history whose names would endure for all time. "I assure you," said he, "that there was something sublime about that woman. Assuredly our twin souls were made to understand each other. Circumstances, alas, prevented a close union between us."

The terrible Théroigne ended her life in the same fashion as her admirer, and died at the madhouse of the Salpêtrière some years later, when the Marquis had sunk into a state of utter senile decay. She might well have served as a model for Juliette, the semi-insane heroine of one of De Sade's most celebrated and most outrageous works. Her life, indeed, resembled nothing so much as an indecent and brutal novel, and she richly deserved the public castigation which a band of outraged women once administered to her in the gardens of the Tuileries.

Like her admirer the Marquis of infamous renown,

band of female furies and took part in the massacre of the Swiss Guards, that faithful body of men whose memory, let it be hoped, will ever be kept green by the Lion sculptured by Thorwaldsen at Lucerne.

After the slaughter, Théroigne has been described as presenting a terrible appearance, her arms covered with blood and a human ear stuck as a *cocarde* in her cap.

Théroigne de Méricourt was a noxious human weed, the development of which was facilitated by the blood-stained miasmas of the great Revolution, which, though it may have done something to assist the progress of humanity, was in many of its phases favourable to much which was abnormal and bad.

V

Carrier and his so-called Republican Marriages—His Cruelty and Love of Orgies—Simone Évrard the Mistress of Marat—Charlotte Corday and her Platonic Lover, Adam Lux—Wives of the Terrorists—Fouquier-Tinville, Danton, Billaud-Varenne and others—The Romance of Camille Desmoulins—Curious Marriage of General Dumouriez—His Disillusionment and Harsh Behaviour—Madame Langenois who, as a Dragoon, Side by Side with her Lover charged for France—Other Female Soldiers of the Republic

WHILST there is no positive proof that the Marquis de Sade ever actually perpetrated any of the insane cruelties over which he gloats in the most notorious of his books, the same cannot be said of another and a far more coarse votary of pleasure, Jean Baptiste Carrier, whose name rings through all history as the infamous author of the *noyades* and massacres of Nantes. Other and even graver charges have been brought against this monster, though on close investigation he must be acquitted of the horrible accusation which branded him as the author of the Republican Marriages (of which Swinburne wrote). The charge of having authorized the binding of young men to young women and then causing the couples to be thrown into the Loire was withdrawn during the trial, which ended in Carrier's condemnation and death.

The real truth of the matter seems to be that some of the butchers employed by Carrier actually did bind couples together and hurl them into the river, gloating over their drowning struggles and gleefully crying out, "voilà un mariage républicain"; such proceedings, however, cannot be proved to have been authorized by Carrier himself, whose memory is already sufficiently blackened by his undoubted enjoyment of the terrible *noyades* in which, from first to last, over four thousand people are said to have been drowned. Carrier's first effort in this direction was the drowning of some ninety priests, who were taken out in a vessel into deep water and then transferred to another, which, by a previously designed arrangement, sank with all on board.

So delighted was this monster with the success of this scheme for simplifying wholesale murder, that he presented the principal organizer, Lamberty, with the ship which had served as prison for the priests previous to their death, and, after the vessel had been thoroughly cleaned, presided over a dinner to some fifteen to twenty people, to whom he read the account of the *noyade* which he was sending to the Convention. Lamberty afterwards gave a spirited account of the whole affair, dwelling with much complacency upon the sabre cuts he had administered to such priests as had tried to save themselves by swim-

ming. His chief was so much moved at this that he embraced Lamberty several times, declaring that he was the "best of revolutionaries"; after which another murderer, Robin by name—a young man hardly twenty years old, sang songs glorifying the triumph of Liberal ideas and the downfall of the old régime.

Of all the criminals by nature who, during the Revolution, contrived to thrust themselves into prominent positions, Carrier was probably the worst. Hampered in his youth by lack of means from gratifying his appetite for coarse and sensual enjoyment, this monster, when in supreme power at Nantes, usually passed his nights in orgies of the most atrocious description. The constant recurrence of the saturnalia which he loved appears to have thrown him into a state of nervous mania, and almost completely prevented him from indulging in sleep. He wrote to the Convention that he had not slept during four nights in forty, whilst intimating that official worries were the cause —the real reason being of a totally different nature. The Pompadour of Carrier was a woman called Le Caron, who made a great deal of money by selling meat and munitions to the troops of the Republic; she also received large sums from those whom her relations with Carrier enabled her to save from execution. Another of his mistresses was La Normand, who, less ambitious, merely did all she could

to get her husband into a good position, in which she was successful, her bloodthirsty lover obtaining for him a highly-paid post in Paris.

Overcome with the effects of gross dissipation and wine, Carrier lived in a sort of sensual lethargy too often broken by fits of insane fury.

Slimy hypocrisy is too often the characteristic of lawyers who dabble in politics; and, like all men of low nature, Carrier appears to have been no exception in this respect, glib utterances as to the sovereignty of the people falling easily from his tongue. As a youthful pettifogger it is recorded that he used to deplore his own sensitive nature which prevented him from even seeing a chicken killed! Robespierre also, it will be remembered, was—in his early years at least—intensely sensitive about such matters—an indication perhaps that exaggerated sentimentalism is not very far removed from a tendency to crime! Of Carrier it was written—

> "Les éléments pour lui deviennent des bourreaux;
> Vieillards, femmes et enfants, expirent dans les eaux."

In all probability he was not entirely sane, his behaviour when he was brought to the scaffold being a further proof of this. At his execution he exhibited the greatest calm, which nothing seems to have been able to shake.

Lamberty had been guillotined some time before on a charge of having favoured the Royalists. A specially grave accusation brought against him declared that he had saved a Madame Giroult de Marcilly, a lady of noble birth, known, by reason of the hatred she bore towards the Republic, as the "Second Marie Antoinette."

Lamberty, as a matter of fact, had been in the habit of sparing pretty Royalist women who consented to accept his advances without repulsion, and this, rather than his participation in the *noyades*, caused the death which he so richly deserved.

The chiefs of the Revolution, cruel and inhuman as most of them were towards all whom they suspected of being out of sympathy with their extravagant ideals, were for the most part very partial to women. Every wild beast has a mate; and Marat lived with Simone Évrard, known after his death as "la veuve Marat." After the monster's death, she remained with his sister Albertine, a woman of great character, whose countenance much resembled that of her terrible brother, whose memory she worshipped.

Her little room became a sort of Pantheon, full of all sorts of relics of him whom she called the "Martyr of Liberty."

It may be added that considerable doubt has been cast on the authenticity of several copies of Marat's

paper *L'Ami du Peuple* which bear blood stains, and are said to have been in his hand at the moment of assassination.

Albertine Marat herself certainly gave or sold Colonel Maurin one of these in the thirties of the last century; but, as has been said, several are in existence—the writer, for instance, saw a copy in a very curious collection of relics of Marat which were for sale in London a year or two ago—they had belonged, he thinks, to the caricaturist, Piloteill.

Altogether there are about eight numbers of the *Ami du Peuple* stained with Marat's blood in existence, but there is little reason to doubt their authenticity. The explanation probably is that the "Martyr of Liberty" was engaged in correcting proofs or in looking for a reference; and consequently had something like a dozen copies hung over the side of the curious boot-shaped bath (now in the Musée Grévin, Paris) where he met his fate.

Many attempts have been made to prove that Charlotte Corday was prompted to the assassination of the monstrous Marat owing to her love for some one who had suffered at the hands of those in power, but all have failed. The only real lover she had was one who nurtured for her a pure and immaterial passion—an entirely hopeless love which caused him to follow her even into the tomb.

It was in her last hours that Mlle. de Corday inspired this romantic and noble affection.

When on the evening of Wednesday, July 17, 1793, she went radiant to the scaffold, a handsome young man, overcome with emotion, was observed to be making great efforts to approach the tumbril which bore the executioner Sanson and his victim. Turning her eyes in his direction, the heroine thanked the young man by a glance of supreme sympathy and affection. He witnessed her execution, and then pushed his way through the crowd, to the astonishment of which he kept murmuring, "Greater than Brutus!"

The name of this young man was Adam Lux, deputy of Mayence at the Convention. A great student of philosophy, love of the republican ideals had made him leave his quiet German home, his wife and two children to go to Paris. Here, however, he soon became disgusted with the excesses of the Revolution.

The assassination of Marat by Charlotte Corday, whilst it must have shocked this gentle nature, did not altogether arouse his disapproval; he realized that, as she said at her trial, one man had been killed to save a hundred thousand, and conceived a violent admiration for this beautiful girl whose political ideals were the same as his own. Lamartine, indeed,

declares that Adam Lux was present at her trial, being very much moved at the interrogations to which she was subjected; and finally, when the death sentence had been pronounced, rose—a moving figure—in order to make a heartfelt protest, when emotion overcame him and he sank back exhausted in his seat.

After this enthusiastic worshipper of Charlotte had seen her head fall into the basket of the guillotine, his agitation no longer knew any bounds; and he swore many fervent oaths to avenge the heroic victim. His first act was to pen a passionate eulogium of the dead girl, which he caused to be circulated all over Paris—it breathes a spirit of intense love. "Sublime girl," wrote he, "I will not speak of the impression you may have made on the hearts of others, but will confine myself to setting forth the feelings which you evoked in my soul.

" . . . How astonished was I, when, in addition to that courage which I expected, I witnessed your unchanging sweetness amidst the savagery of a barbarous crowd. I recall your soft and penetrating glance, and the clear, humid sparkle of your beautiful eyes telling of a soul as tender as it was intrepid—charming eyes that should have been able to move rocks. This is a unique and immortal souvenir for me, and those angel glances which

penetrated my heart and filled it with hitherto unknown emotions, the sweetness of which equalled the pain, will be effaced from my soul only with my last breath. . . .

"Your sweet, beloved recollection will never leave my heart. It augments and sustains my love for the Fatherland for which you desired to die. In order to encourage me to love this country, of which I have the honour to be an adopted son, I shall in future have no need to recall the Spartans and Romans; for it will be enough to think continually of Charlotte Corday."

Adam Lux proceeded to defy the Jacobins and to invoke the same death as the object of his adoration. Three days after the appearance of this pamphlet, he was arrested, and in due course brought to trial before the revolutionary tribunal, which, amongst other interrogatories, questioned him as to a project of committing suicide, which he was known to have nurtured out of disgust with the sanguinary excesses of the Jacobins. He assumed full responsibility for the printed eulogium of Charlotte Corday and refused to divulge the printer's name. The infamous Fouquier-Tinville prosecuted with his usual ferocity, reproaching the prisoner with having written a pompous apology for the murderess of Marat in which "the delirium of a

tender passion for an execrable monster was interwoven with a desire to rejoin her in the celestial regions." The jury unanimously pronounced Lux guilty, and on the fourteenth Brumaire 1793 this chivalrous heart went to the scaffold with the same calm as the girl for whom he had shown such a sympathetic passion. It is said that as he placed his head under the knife, he joyously cried: "After all, I am dying for Charlotte."

By a curious and touching coincidence he was to join her in the tomb, for a few days later his body was laid next hers in a little plot of ground at the angle of the Rue Rocher and the Rue du Valois, and so these two noble hearts were reunited in death.

In connection with the subject of Charlotte Corday, it is of interest to know that her family name was held in great veneration in Normandy for a peculiar reason. The heroine was by descent connected with the family of Bailleul (Balliol), said to be descended from Kings of Scotland, and for this reason the peasantry would bring those suffering from the king's evil to be touched, in accordance with the ancient superstition which declared that royalty possessed the power of curing such a disease.

In prison during the terror not a few found the

romance of their lives. Thrown into St. Lazare by the patriots of Passy, the poet André Chènier met the woman whom he immortalized as "La Jeune Captive"—Mlle. de Coigny, who only escaped death by her gaolers being bribed.

This lady, however, did not reciprocate the poet's love, and, indeed, thought so little of him as to give away the manuscript copy of the verses addressed to her to a fellow-prisoner, who happily preserved them for posterity.

Mlle. de Coigny, though an agreeable and beautiful woman, was scarcely worthy of being idealized by the unfortunate poet who failed to win her heart. A far more heroic lady was Madame Victoire de la Villirouët, the wife of an *emigré* who had fought against the armies of the Republic.

Arraigned before a military tribunal, Villirouët was found to be without a lawyer to plead his cause. "Who is your defender?" asked the Président-Général Cathol. "My wife," was the prisoner's reply; and at the same moment a piquant-looking little woman rose to her feet and commenced an eloquent and touching speech, which lasted for forty-two minutes. So well did she plead the cause of a husband that she adored, that the whole court was visibly affected, even rough old soldiers bursting into tears when the prisoner, before being led away, was allowed a last embrace.

The judges, after half-an-hour's deliberation, returned with a verdict of acquittal, upon which Madame de la Villirouët received an ovation. For some time the pretty little Bretonne became the idol of Paris.

This brave woman, whose wonderful oratory saved her husband's life, lies in the cemetery of Lamballe, her heroic devotion, courage and eloquence fittingly commemorated by an inscription on her tomb.

Amongst the many pathetic incidents of the Revolution must be ranked the enforced marriage of a delicate and unwilling young girl to the terrible Danton, who three months after the death of his first wife, Gabrielle Charpentier, sought the hand of his landlord's daughter, aged sixteen.

M. Gély being under obligations to the fiery tribune, who had obtained for him a lucrative post, dared not refuse.

Of a family who by tradition were devoted to monarchical principles and brought up to venerate the religious faith which it was one of the avowed objects of the French Revolution to destroy, Louise Gély was horrified to be confronted with such a suitor.

Fearful, however, of one accounted a Titan amongst his fellows of the Convention, she did not like to offend him by a direct refusal; and so sought to escape her terrible lover by exacting a promise

that he whose voice made Europe tremble should make his confession to one of the priests who had refused to comply with the regulations drawn up by the Anti-clerical Government, of which Danton was such a powerful member.

Contrary to her hopes, Danton did not hesitate for an instant, and the day after she had given him her answer sought out the Abbé de Keravenan, made his confession in due form, and then returned to claim his horrified bride, whose inclinations favoured a more gentle lover—Claud Dupin, whom she eventually married two years after Danton's death.

The marriage of the audacious Tribune and the reluctant Mlle. Gély was secretly celebrated according to the Catholic rites which she exacted, before an improvised altar in a garret in the Passage du Commerce, not a hundred yards away from the spot where the statue of Danton now stands.

The stories of the ill-assorted couple having led a life of peaceful domestic felicity in Paris and at Danton's native place, Arcis-sur-Aube, are pure fiction.

Far from clinging to this leading spirit of triumphant democracy "as the honeysuckle enlaces the robust oak which inclines its branches towards heaven," Madame Danton held her husband, whom

she had only married from fear and from a desire not to displease her family, in sheer horror; and his death on the scaffold, after a wedded life of ten months, would appear to have been regarded by her as a welcome relief.

Antoine Danton (the son of the terrible orator by his first marriage) and his step-mother have been charmingly represented in a picture by Boilly called "L'Optique," which was engraved in colours by Tresca.

When her husband had perished on the scaffold, Louise reassumed her maiden name. She wished, it would seem, to obliterate everything connected with a marriage she had loathed; for during the rest of her life no word of allusion to it ever passed her lips. She lived through the First and Second Empires, dying only about 1875 at a very advanced age. Most of the wives of the Terrorists seem to have been gentle, easy-going women, and not a few, unlike the second Madame Danton, were devoted to their husbands, whom they believed to be the most humane of men battling against reactionary tyranny.

No union, for instance, could have been happier or more serene than that between Angélique Doye, a young girl of German extraction, and Mâitre Billaud-Varenne, a somewhat unsuccessful lawyer, who, by way of supplementing his very modest income, wrote

little plays which were hissed, and books which found no readers.

During the early days of their marriage the couple found difficulty in making both ends meet.

In the turbulent maelstrom of 1789, however, like a number of others hitherto soured by failure, Billaud rose to the surface and soon became a prominent figure amongst the rascals and dreamers who for a time contrived to dominate France.

Cynical and heartless by nature (his patron Danton whom he sent to the scaffold declared that he kept a dagger under his tongue) Billaud soon became prominent amongst the Terrorists, and cheerfully soaked his hands in blood. He took part in organizing the massacres of the prisons, warmly congratulating the murderers, seeing that their revolutionary fervour received its reward. As President of the Jacobin Club he helped to send the Girondins and the Queen to their doom—whilst according a cheerful and ready assent to the *noyades* of Carrier, to the hecatombs of Lyons and the cannonades of Arras.

Every sentence of death bore his approving signature, and he made a point of signing at the top of the document before his colleagues, whom he afterwards abandoned.

Nevertheless, the home life of this monster was

ideal, and, the best of husbands, he adored his wife. Unlike so many of the men of the Revolution, Billaud never dreamt of being unfaithful—no cloud of jealousy or discontent ever darkened the clear horizon of their union in a home which was a model of domestic felicity.

The gentle Angélique adored her husband and thought him a great man, though she seems to have disapproved of the queer yellow wig—like a lion's mane—which for some mysterious reason he insisted on wearing to his dying day. She esteemed him as the most honourable, tender and best of men, trusted him entirely, priding herself that theirs was the happiest household in all Paris.

In March 1795, however, came the evil days, for feeling began to run strongly against the Terrorists, and, like many others, Billaud, though he had thrown over those who had acted with him, did not escape arrest. A month later, to the intense disgust of many who clamoured for his blood, he received the comparatively mild sentence of transportation. A large section of the Parisians were furiously incensed at such leniency, and on one day no less than 48,000 troops had to be called out to preserve the prisoner from being lynched, and only with extreme difficulty was he taken to La Rochelle. At all the stages of his journey execrations rang in

his ears, the citizens of Tours, in particular, being highly disappointed at not being allowed to throw him into the Loire.

Shipped out to Cayenne, the first portion of his exile was passed in the fort there, after which he was transferred to a particularly unhealthy district, the dangerous climate of which, however, affected him but little.

Meanwhile, Madame Billaud fell into dire straits. All her neighbours shunned her, and she was almost without money—worst of all she was in ignorance of her husband's fate. When at last she did learn of his departure for Cayenne, overwhelming grief seized her, and for long days she bewailed the separation from one whom she continued to describe as a pure and beautiful soul.

In order to escape notice, she now assumed another name, and, dressing herself in her best—for she knew the value of presenting an attractive appearance—proceeded to apply for permission to go and join her adored husband beyond the seas.

Angélique Billaud was a pretty woman, and the authorities made little difficulty about granting her request. Armed with a permit, she had completed all her arrangments for departure, when the course of her life was suddenly changed; for being stricken with illness, and miserably hampered by lack of

funds, a great admirer of her husband's political career came to her aid. This was a good-natured American, the rich and eccentric Mr. Johnson. To all appearance this philanthropic individual was the exact counterpart of a modern faddist of advanced Radical type whose efforts to improve humanity, had he lived in the present age, would most probably have received enthusiastic recognition instead of pitying indifference.

To a man of such a disposition, Billaud, with his high-flown phrases about the Rights of Man—Equality, Fraternity and the rest, appeared as an ill-used and highly sympathetic character. The brutal way in which such a friend of the people had been treated, together with the good looks of his wife, moved Mr. Johnson's pity; and not only did he relieve the lady's distress, but also began concocting plans to rescue the misjudged patriot from durance vile.

For a time the American was bent upon arming and equipping a vessel for the coast of Cayenne, where it should take Billaud away by force and deposit him safe and sound in "glorious America"—at that time admittedly the land of the free—but the scheme, owing to the preponderating chances of failure, was never carried out. Nevertheless, Madame Billaud seems to have spent so much time discussing it that she no longer had sufficient leisure to write at

length to her husband. Eventually, however, she did go to La Rochelle, there to embark and join him, when her plans were again changed by a peremptory communication from Billaud bidding her on no account risk the dangers of a terrible climate; so being an obedient wife she immediately returned to Paris and her philanthropic American.

Though the latter had abandoned his first scheme, he formed another of a more peaceful nature.

As the immediate liberation of the noble Billaud seemed impossible, the next best thing, said Mr. Johnson, would be to assure his future in case he ever should be released. This could easily be arranged, the only requisite being that Madame Billaud should arrange a divorce, and then marry the speaker, who was in very bad health and unlikely to live more than a few years, after which Madame Johnson, inheriting his considerable fortune, would be able to divide the money with the noble revolutionist now in captivity beyond the seas.

After some consideration the lady gave her approval to this plan, and, having divorced her absent husband (who, in order to avoid any feeling of irritation or annoyance, was to be kept ignorant of the beneficent arrangement), married Mr. Johnson, and, as he pointed out, by so doing made several people happy. For a considerable period of time after this,

Madame Johnson wrote no more to her ex-husband; but this feeling of constraint wore away after two years, when she appears to have sent him some money and offered him more. It is not, however, certain that the old Terrorist, who at Cayenne showed a good deal of independence and pride, ever consented to receive these sums. He had heard of his wife's doings from a passing sea-captain, and, exhibiting remarkable stoicism, took little notice, merely mentioning in a letter to his father-in-law that he swallowed this sorrow with many others and thought no more about it.

Three years later the American died, leaving Madame Billaud all his wealth. She then wrote to her original husband begging for a reconciliation, and offering to divide her fortune with him. But the exile would have none of it, and repelled all efforts to obtain his forgiveness. At last, finding that her former husband was quite determined never to see her again, Madame Johnson married a young man of good position, to whom at her death in 1815 she left the whole of the wealth which Billaud had sternly declined to accept.

Billaud, as his behaviour towards his wife shows, was not lacking in a sort of stoical dignity copied by the men of the Revolution from the Romans. When Bonaparte became First Consul, he decreed an

amnesty for deported prisoners, but the old Jacobin in grandiloquent terms refused to benefit by it, and remained at Cayenne, where he had managed to scrape together sufficient funds to do a little farming. Regarded as an eccentric recluse, he had installed a young negress in his modest hut; a curious sympathy much akin to love had arisen between the little black slave girl and the ex-President of the Convention, who in the style of Rousseau described his abode as sheltering another Philemon and Baucis. Brigitte, as this girl was called, besides being invaluable as a housewife, assisted in keeping the few slaves owned by her strange lover in order. In his days of power he had often gained the plaudits of the Convention by his tumultuous denunciations of slavery, the abolition of which as a member of the Committee of Public Safety he had solemnly decreed. His contact with the negro, however, had entirely changed such views, and though devoted to his dusky mistress, to whom he had given her freedom, he no longer felt any sympathy for the black race in general. Most of his ideas, indeed, had undergone a complete alteration, and as time went on the callous monster of revolutionary days developed into a strange kind of romantic dreamer. Two or three hours of each day he passed in writing a dissertation on love,

scribbling scraps of poetry and notes on life. He denounced the scaffold (to which he had sent so many) as an abomination ever impotent to check crime. In 1815, probably from fear of being remembered by the Bourbons once again in power, Billaud determined to leave Guiana, and went with his faithful negress to the United States, where he hoped to make a living by his pen. But the ways of the New World were not for him, and in a short time, probably on his mistress's account, he betook himself to St. Domingo, where he succeeded in obtaining modest employment.

He died at Port au Prince in 1819, his last glance being for his beloved Brigitte. Far from repenting of a blood-stained past, this extraordinary character, in whom philanthropic sentimentality was carried to its extreme limit, passed away quite confident that posterity would blame him only for having been too gentle in his days of power. He left everything he possessed to Brigitte "in recognition of her inviolable attachment and faithful service during a long course of years." After his death she remained at Port au Prince, where she was still alive as late as 1874. She was then, however, known by the name of Virginie: in all probability Billaud-Varenne had been an admirer of Bernardin de St.-Pierre.

Another Terrorist who, like Billaud, whilst revel-

ling in blood, was the best of husbands at home, was the infamous Hébert, who adored his wife and lived in a style idyllic from the point of view of peaceful domesticity. When, indeed, Madame Hébert was about to become a mother, she wrote to her sister-in-law to say that every day her husband was giving her some new proof of his tenderness. "The only difference between us," she added, "is that he is so desirous that the child should be like me, and I am so anxious that it should resemble him." When a daughter was born, it received the curious name of Scipion-Virginie.

Hébert's obscene and murderous sheet, *Le Père Duchesne*, was written in his peaceful home, whilst his child slumbered and his wife, who had been a nun and still remained religious, prayed. She admired and approved of her husband, whose hands, stained with the blood of countless victims, including the King and Queen, whom he assisted in sending to the scaffold, she declared were as guiltless as his soul.

When the monster expiated his crimes under the guillotine, Madame Hébert was a prisoner in the Conciergerie, where she met the charming Lucille Desmoulins, whose husband had been Hébert's bitter foe. Nevertheless, now that both the romantic Camille and the unspeakable "Père Duchesne"

had perished on the scaffold, the two women became friends. Both of them had children of about the same age, and both were called before the tribunal together; the sweet Lucille Desmoulins, heroic and joyful at the thought of being about to join her lover in death; Madame Hébert, stupefied and awkward. When sentence had been passed and the prisoners were led out of the Court, the latter was in an almost fainting condition. On her way to the scaffold, the tumbril passed the Convent of the Conception, the gardens of which at that time stretched up to the Boulevard. There, as a girl, the wretched woman had taken the vows of perpetual obedience, chastity, and seclusion—vows which she had broken during the Revolution; with the result that she had married the wretch for whose misdeeds she was about to suffer.

So terrible was her condition when confronted with the guillotine, that it was an inanimate form on which fell the blow of the fatal knife.

Lucille, on the other hand, went to her doom radiant and serene—her record was stainless, and she could proudly leave life by the *escalier d'honneur*.

She wrote to her mother just before falling a victim to the fatal knife: "Good-night, dear Mamma—a tear is falling from my eyes; it is for you—I go to sleep in the calm of innocence."

The charming Lucille indeed welcomed death, hoping once more to be reunited to her dear Camille, who eight days before had gone to execution amidst the brutal jeers and acclamations of a populace who had formerly been moved to frenzied enthusiasm by his impassioned words. His letters written in prison to Lucille, whom he had adored since he had seen her a child of thirteen full of joyous life, are poignant poems of love and despair. "Dearest," wrote he, "I was born to make verses, to defend the unfortunate, and to make you happy. My real life ended the moment they separated us—my manacled hands embrace you, and my severed head casts its dying eyes upon you." His cell looked out upon the Luxembourg Gardens, where he had so often wandered with his darling, who had lived in her father's house close by. Here it was that her tender heart had first opened itself to love.

To the lover of romance this quarter of Paris must ever remain associated with the memory of this ill-fated couple, whose story is the idyll of the Revolution—Camille Desmoulins, whose laugh once caused the walls of the Bastille to totter, and the charming wife, who ennobled his character by the devotion which she inspired.

A romance of a different kind was the devotion of General Dumouriez to his cousin, Mlle. de

Broissy. Much to his chagrin, this lady, being of a strongly religious temperament, decided to take the veil. Within a short time, however, convent discipline proving too severe for her health to bear, she retired to a life of private religious seclusion at Caen.

When Dumouriez was away in Corsica, Mlle. de Broissy was attacked by the smallpox, which completely destroyed all vestiges of her good looks. Nevertheless, her lover, who had proposed to her twice, continued to press his suit, and at last only abandoned it in sheer despair. After an absence of twelve years, however, when it seemed likely that the affair was a thing of the past, his military duties took him to Caen, where once again he met his old love.

Moved, no doubt, in some measure by false rumours that the weak state of health and the excessive piety of Mlle. de Broissy were the result of having been thrown over by him, Dumouriez, though now not in love, paid her a visit. She was then thirty years of age with scant remains of her former beauty. The meeting was extremely emotional, Dumouriez throwing himself into her arms and exclaiming: "Oh, comme tu es changée! mais je t'aime toujours." They discussed their former affection and agreed that it would be best to meet rarely. Shortly after-

wards Dumouriez went to Falaise, where he learnt that Mlle. de Broissy was again seriously ill, smitten with a fever. Upon this, returning post-haste to Caen, he flew to her bedside and nursed her tenderly for twenty-eight days, during which he formed the opinion that this illness was in a great measure caused by the emotions which the sight of an old admirer had produced in the lady's breast. He thereupon determined to marry her, and during the convalescence, which resulted from his care, was at last accepted. The marriage, owing to the bride's religious vows, entailed considerable trouble and expense, 3,000 francs having to be paid to the Pope for a dispensation, and many formalities to be fulfilled. Dumouriez, indeed, was compelled to sell 5,000 volumes of his cherished library in order to set up house. The honeymoon was spent with the Abesse de Fervacques at St. Quentin, and at first it seemed as if there was a prospect of considerable wedded bliss. But a year or two later, however, serious disunion arose in the household. Given high command at Cherbourg, Dumouriez there made the acquaintance of a clever and designing woman—the Baronne Barruel-Beauvert, known as the Baronne d'Angel, a sister of Rivarol—she ridiculed the extreme piety practised by Madame Dumouriez, whose husband, it should be added,

had already become tired of the punctilious piety of his wife. An admirer of Voltaire, he declared that, whilst highly intolerant, she attached too much importance to ceremonies of the Church. He himself, though no atheist, estimated all religions as being but variations of one uniform principle—the adoration of a Deity who judges man more by his virtues than by any sacrifice. Nevertheless, Dumouriez was by no means indifferent to the details of public worship; indeed, for nearly a year he maintained an acrimonious controversy with the "Marguillers"[1] of Caen as to their right to sit in front of him in the church, he being the Commandant of the town.

In the end, no doubt at the instigation of the Baronne d'Angel, a separation was arranged, after which Dumouriez appears to have treated his wife with a great lack of consideration.

When the General had been in love with Mlle. de Broissy all his efforts had been directed towards keeping her from entering a convent: now he had become tired of her all his efforts were directed in an exactly opposite direction. Eventually they succeeded, much to the detriment of the poor woman's health. His whole behaviour, indeed, seems to

[1] "Churchwardens." Disputes of the same sort have not been uncommon on this side of the Channel.

have been as unfeeling as in former days it was kind; Dumouriez had fallen victim to that inflexible brutality with which, as Rousseau pointed out, so many unfaithful husbands are wont to aggravate their offence.

The mention of her death in his *Memoirs* shows how indifferent he had become; it merely says, "Mme. Dumouriez est morte à St.-Germains sous le règne de Bonaparte."

Dumouriez appears to have been very partial to the fair sex, some of whom, it is said, accompanied him to the field of battle. At Jemmapes and in other actions two sisters are supposed to have been constantly by his side acting as aides-de-camp. These girls showed great courage, and were commended in reports sent to the President of the National Convention and the Minister of War.

It was not an uncommon thing during the Napoleonic wars for women to follow a lover or husband into the field; as a rule, they assumed military garb, and a few served like any ordinary soldier.

Quite a number of pretty young women at that time made a point of keeping a masculine costume in their wardrobes, and, during the campaign in Spain, up to the end of the First Empire, scarcely one of the French Generals was unaccompanied by a wife or mistress, in many instances in male dress.

A conspicuous instance of this was a young lady, who, falling in love with a handsome young soldier—Langenois by name—taken ill whilst billeted in her father's house—braved the opposition of her parents, dressed herself in man's clothes, and, flying with her lover, joined a regiment of hussars, with which as a trooper she fought in the campaigns of 1793 and 1794. In this latter year, being wounded, she was made a Cornet, whilst her lover continued in the ranks.

The fact of his sweetheart having outstripped him in gaining promotion appears to have annoyed the young man, for, entering into communication with a relative commanding a regiment of dragoons, in another part of France, he obtained a sub-lieutenancy in his regiment.

Young Langenois had promised to marry the girl, and his departure to the Frontiers of Spain, in spite of her ardent entreaties, almost broke her heart. Wretched and miserable, she determined to seek death in battle, and in the next engagement spurred her horse into the midst of the enemy. The poor animal fell dead under her, while she received a severe sabre-cut on the head. Whilst a prisoner in an Austrian hospital, her sex was discovered, for which reason she was nursed with much tenderness, and, when convalescent, exchanged. On her arrival

in the French lines she at once resigned her commission as an officer of hussars and enlisted as a volunteer in the dragoon regiment in which her lover was serving.

The surprise of the latter at once more seeing the girl whom he had wronged was extreme—on hearing a report of her death, he had been stricken with remorse; consequently he was delighted to see her once more, and, recognizing her devotion and bravery, not only married her but obtained a lieutenant's commission for her from his relative, so that he and his wife might fight side by side. The gallant couple charged together in several battles, where the lady received three wounds and was made a full lieutenant by Bonaparte: at the same battle her husband gained a captaincy by his dashing bravery.

At the siege of Genoa the lady again distinguished herself so greatly that Murat obtained for her a sword of honour, which was afterwards presented to her in Paris by Napoleon in person. Of this sword Madame Langenois was very proud.

This female officer, it should be added, was intensely popular in her regiment of dragoons, the troopers of which never tired of praising her courage and goodness—the whole story forms a curious military romance highly characteristic of

the unconventional ways which prevailed a hundred years ago.

The last of these female soldiers died at a great age in 1861. This was Thérèse Figuier, who by special permission of the French military authorities served for twenty years in a regiment of cuirassiers. After an engagement in which she had shown extraordinary courage, Napoleon himself had personally complimented her before her comrades of the sterner sex, drinking her health amidst much enthusiasm. This was the one consoling souvenir of a poverty-stricken old age, and to her last hour she revered the memory of the great Emperor for whom she had fought as a soldier of the Grande Armée.

VI

Effect produced on Women by Napoleon—His first Love Affair—Désirée Clary—Meeting with Josephine—Marriage—Her Pet Dog bites his Leg—Josephine reluctantly sets out to join him in Italy—Her Liaison with Lieutenant Charles—Promises to see the Young Officer no more, but renews the Liaison whilst Bonaparte is in Egypt—Again forgiven—Her Life at the Malmaison—Divorce and Death—Hortense Beauharnais and her Love Affair with Count Flahaut—Her Son, the Duc de Morny—Napoleon's Second Marriage to Marie Louise and the Latter's Intrigue with Neipperg—The Duc de Reichstadt—His Alleged Love of Fanny Elsler and end

"THE trembling trees bowed down before him as he advanced, the sun-rays quivered, in a curious tremor, through the green leaves, and in the blue heaven above there swam visibly a golden star.

"The Emperor wore his invisible green uniform and the world-renowned hat. He rode a white palfrey which stepped with such calm pride, so confidently, so nobly!—had I then been Crown Prince of Prussia I would have envied that horse. The Emperor sat carelessly, almost lazily, holding with one hand his rein and with the other good-naturedly patting the neck of the horse. It was a sunny marble hand, a mighty hand—one of the pair which bound fast the many-headed monster of anarchy, and reduced to order the war of races

—and it good-naturedly patted the neck of the horse. Even the face had that hue which we find in the marble Greek and Roman busts, the traits were as nobly proportioned as in the antiques; and on that countenance was plainly written 'Thou shalt have no gods before me.'"

Thus wrote Heine after seeing Napoleon at Düsseldorf, and from his description it is easy to realize how great an impression the great War Lord must have made upon people in general.

Women in particular were quite overcome by the glamour which hung about his path. In her *Memoirs* the Countess Potocka describes the feeling of mute surprise—of stupor as if confronted by a prodigy—which seized her when for the first time she saw the Emperor at a reception in the Palace at Warsaw. In her eyes he wore an aureole of glory; and, as she looked at him stepping forward as if to challenge admiration, the thought flashed through her mind: can such a being possibly die?—can such a mighty or stupendous genius ever perish? And in her heart she awarded this new Cæsar a double immortality.

Many who had never even seen him re-echoed the cry of the sexagenarian Sophie Arnould, who from her retreat at Paraclet rapturously greeted Napoleon as her hero.

This being so, it is not to be wondered at that numbers of young women aspired to win the smiles of this new Alexander, and not a few under the impression that they were on their way to a splendid triumph threw themselves in his way, only to encounter the lash of his withering contempt.

Willing enough to be charmed, he entirely refused to be enslaved, whilst manifesting the greatest repulsion for self-assertive or strong-minded womankind. Especially did he seek the ultra-feminine in woman; whilst his ultimatum of distaste was reserved for any attempt at female emancipation or display of quasi-masculine faculties. Such views originated the relentless disdain he meted out to Madame de Staël, whom he declared was not to be treated as a woman but as a man.

"I am used to kind, gentle, persuasive women," he once wrote to Josephine; "these are the women I like." The resolve to dominate he kept. No woman with whom Napoleon came in contact ever exercised any direct influence over him in political affairs, though undoubtedly a few did mould his ideas, and led him unconsciously to adopt certain decisions. The prominent part which women played in the great Emperor's life, far from detracting from his fame, enhances it, for it shows that he was no cold, non-human mortal (such as so many would-be great

men have striven to appear), but true flesh and blood, ready to respond to all those sensations and emotions which woman alone is capable of inspiring.

The first love affair of Lieutenant Bonaparte, (if a boyish liaison of an unromantic kind can be called a love affair), originated in the galleries of the Palais Royal, where one November evening the young officer, then eighteen years old, met a girl from Nantes, who seems in the first instance to have aroused his pity rather than his passion by her account of the misfortunes which had caused her to become a frequenter of the Palais Royal, then the resort of all the pleasure-seekers of Europe.

A much more serious episode which occurred some years later was his flirtation with his sister-in-law, Désirée Clary, who wrote him many ardent letters. The exact reason why no marriage resulted is obscure; according to one account Désirée finally rejected Bonaparte—according to another, perhaps more reliable, on his return to Paris the affection of the latter cooled. It is certain that at this period (1795) the young soldier became much fascinated by the attractions of the *Parisiennes*. "Les femmes," wrote he, "qui sont ici, les plus belles du monde, deviennent la grande affaire." He always retained an affectionate memory of this youth-

ful love, and though her marriage to General Bernadotte, afterwards King of Sweden, did not please him, he consented to be godfather to a son, who by the Emperor's wish was called Oscar. Later on, in spite of Bernadotte having conspired against Napoleon, the latter gave him a mansion with 400,000 francs, an income of 300,000, and the Principality of Pontecorvo. Owing to the Emperor's benevolent neutrality, Bernadotte was eventually elected hereditary Prince of Sweden; indeed, Napoleon never failed to shower favours upon the husband of the girl he had once thought of making his wife—the latter, however, in the evil days of her old lover's career, did not show herself too grateful.

It was towards the close of the year 1795 that General Bonaparte, second in command of the Army of the Interior, having ordered the disarmament of the Parisians, granted the request for an interview by a mere youth, Eugène Beauharnais by name. Touched by the latter's request to be allowed to retain the sword of his father, who had once commanded the Army of the Rhine,[1] the General granted his petition; and in consequence

[1] This story has been doubted by many, but M. Masson, the greatest authority as to Napoleonic history, has given it his support.

received a visit of thanks from the boy's mother, Josephine, who at once made a deep impression upon the heart of the future Emperor.

The widow of Alexandre de Beauharnais, executed in the previous year, was then in a somewhat precarious position. Only liberated from prison (into which, as the wife of an aristocrat, she had been thrown) on the 9th Thermidor, she found herself past thirty, with two children, little money and many debts. Never very deeply devoted to her husband, a compound of libertine and prig, who had married her when she was a mere school-girl, after his death she had entered upon a career of frivolous intrigue—the best known of her lovers being the famous Barras. As a woman her chief attractions were a superbly graceful figure, which, combined with a supreme gift of pleasing, at once made a deep impression upon the General of twenty-six, more used to the rough life of camps than the seductions of a woman of the world. A fortnight after the couple had met, a liaison began, followed in four months by a marriage—in all probability furthered by Barras, who, weary of the fascinations and wild extravagance of his beautiful Creole, was only too glad to find himself free.

On the eve of this alliance, Josephine and her General Puss-in-Boots—as she playfully called the

young soldier whose name was destined to reverberate through the corridors of time—went to consult the lady's lawyer, Maître Raguideau. Whilst her lover sat in an ante-room, the man of law is said to have expressed his dissatisfaction with the match, and told his fair client she had much better marry a contractor. Bonaparte, who was not revengeful about such matters, on the eve of his coronation eight years later is said to have summoned the old notary to the Tuileries and presented him with an order for a good view of the ceremony in Notre-Dame.

On March 8, 1796 the civil marriage of Napoleon and Josephine was celebrated in the Hôtel Mondragon in the Rue d'Antin. The room, which exists, is now used as one of the offices of a Bank, but still retains the decorations on which the graceful Creole rested her eyes as she impatiently awaited the coming of her little General. He kept her waiting for two hours, during which one of the witnesses went to sleep, to be roughly awakened by the clanking of a sabre and a brusque voice saying: "Come, come, Monsieur le Maire, marry us quickly!"

The marriage contract concluded on this occasion is remarkable for three misstatements, evidently inserted on purpose. Napoleon is represented as being eighteen months older than he was, while

Josephine's age is given as four years less than the reality. Besides this, the great conqueror's birthplace is given as Paris! This, of course, was because had he really been born at the date mentioned in the contract, he must have been born a Genoese subject; and as this did not suit his ideas he settled the matter as has been stated. The alteration in the dates of birth was a gallant attempt to conceal the great difference in age between bride and bridegroom.

After the ceremony had been completed, the couple drove off to the house in the Rue Chantereine hired by Josephine from the wife of the great actor, Talma. The reception of the bridegroom by Fortuné, Josephine's pet dog, was not of a cordial description, for the little animal, who declined to retire before him who had made whole armies fly, bit Napoleon severely in the leg, an unpleasant incident which the latter remembered for many a long day. As a precautionary measure, he instructed his cook to obtain a very big dog, hoping that it would eat the little one. Nevertheless, when with the Army of Italy he wrote to his wife: "A thousand kisses, and give Fortuné some as well in spite of his naughtiness."

The impression made by their step-father on the children of Josephine was not at first very favourable; indeed, Hortense Beauharnais burst into

tears at school when she heard of the marriage, because she feared that she and her brother would be treated with undue severity. Her grief, however, was soon dispelled, for the same day Napoleon visited the school (kept for young ladies by the celebrated Madame Campan) and complimented pupils and mistress alike, telling the latter he should send his own sister to her in order that she might become as learned as his dear Hortense, whose ear he at the same time playfully pinched. As a matter of fact, he always regarded his step-daughter with feelings of the warmest affection, and, as she grew up, Holard, the head gardener at La Malmaison, knew no better way to please his master than by arranging rows of pots bearing bright-coloured flowers so as to form the letters of the name Hortense.

Napoleon's honeymoon lasted but two days; he had been married on March 9, 1796, and on March 11 he set out to join the Army of Italy, to commence that triumphant career which was only to end in the hecatombs of Waterloo.

Madame Bonaparte remained at her little house in the Rue Chantereine.

Though women have always been supposed to possess extraordinary powers of intuitive judgment, Josephine does not, at first, appear to have realized the extraordinary character and abilities of her

husband, but as far as her somewhat frivolous nature permitted she loved him.

Napoleon for his part was undoubtedly devoted to his bride, though his marriage had probably in the first instance been in some measure prompted by gratification at making a matrimonial alliance with the widow of an aristocrat—for though a soldier of the Republic the young General at heart had little sympathy with democratic ideas.

During his voyage to Nice, at almost every stage of his journey Bonaparte wrote passionate letters to his wife—letters full of supreme self-confidence and ardent love.

He carried her miniature next his heart, and was thrown into despair by the breaking of its glass—because he thought it an omen of an evil kind.

Josephine, indeed, was now ever in his thoughts, and her idealized image spurred him on to triumphs of organization and prodigious victories. In fifteen days during April 1796, the French won six battles and captured twenty-one flags. Their commander was now in the highest spirits, for Junot, who took these trophies to Paris, had orders to bring back with him the *citoyenne* to her adoring husband.

Josephine, however, one of whose chief objects in life was to avoid leaving Paris or its immediate neighbourhood, made all sorts of excuses to put off

such a long journey. She declared she was ill, which plunged Bonaparte into a mood varying between despair and joy; for at first he believed that his wife was about to present him with an heir.

"I accused you of being unwilling to leave Paris," wrote he, "and you were ill. Forgive me, my dear one; the love you inspired has robbed me of reason, which I shall never recover. My malady is incurable."

After further delay, however, Bonaparte began to suspect the various pretexts which his wife put forward; and finally, growing angry, threatened to resign his command and go to Paris to find out the truth. He had good cause to be annoyed; for his brother Joseph had meanwhile sent him word that Josephine was going about as usual.

At last, perceiving that matters were reaching a serious pitch, she consented to set out. With her, besides General Junot, went Joseph Bonaparte, her companion Louise Compoint, her pet dog Fortuné, and, last but not least, a young officer attached to General Leclerc, Hippolyte Charles by name.

At Milan she was soon joined by Bonaparte, who worshipped her like a divinity and could scarcely refrain from covering her with caresses even before

strangers, one[1] of whom recorded that "il prenait avec elle des libertés conjugales qui ne laissaient pas de nous embarrasser." For a time, this love in the midst of war pleased her, but before long she began to weary of so ardent an attachment, which placed her upon a pedestal she was far from deserving. The love of flirtation and excitement, which ran in her veins prompted her to amorous adventure, and her glance fell upon the young Lieutenant of Chasseurs à Cheval who had travelled with her from Paris.

Whenever General Bonaparte was away attending to military matters, this good-looking officer was at the Palazzo Serbelloni, a fact which soon became known to every one except the individual most interested. Nevertheless, he seems to have suspected something of the sort, for a feeling of vague jealousy is expressed in his letters; and after the triumph of Arcoli he returned post haste to Milan, only to find that his wife had gone off to Genoa—presumably not alone.

Pauline, his beautiful sister, is said to have first told Bonaparte the truth. Be this as it may, Charles was suddenly dismissed from the army, and Josephine, who had "les larmes faciles," wept herself into favour

[1] Miot de Mélito, Minister, Ambassador, Councillor of State and Membre de l'Institut—an ever-devoted adherent of Napoleon and his family.

once more, which in all probability was no very difficult task for her to perform. Napoleon was essentially not an immoral man, but an unmoral one. During one of the discussions in Council as to the drawing up of the Civil Code, he said, "adultery is a portentous word; in real life it is but gallantry—an episode of a masked ball." A man who publicly expressed such a sentiment as this would be likely to show leniency; besides, he was very fond of Josephine—indeed, seriously in love with her, as far as he could be in love with any woman. Hippolyte Charles had temporarily upset his existence, but having, as he thought, got rid of him, he was content to forget and forgive. The incident, however, undoubtedly had some effect upon his feelings; for, from that time forth, his letters breathed a less passionate spirit. Nevertheless, as he himself declared, he continued to love his wife, and was at her side as much as possible. He regarded her as the incarnation of elegance and grace, and when he set out for Egypt in the spring of 1798 made her promise to come out to him when the land of the Pharaohs should have fallen before his conquering arms. Alone in France, she gratified that extravagance which was part of her nature, and purchased the Malmaison for 290,000 francs.

She had not long been installed there before the

handsome young Chasseur reappeared upon the scene in an entirely impecunious condition. Josephine, the best-natured of women, soon obtained him a partnership in a firm of army contractors, who, it is said, supplied the troops in Egypt with most inferior victuals at an extortionate rate; thus her lover tricked Bonaparte and starved his troops. In a short time Charles began to live more or less openly at the Malmaison, and all Paris was scandalized at the reports of the amorous scenes enacted in the beautiful grounds.

Of a sudden came the report of Bonaparte's imminent return. Thereupon Josephine with good reason became seriously frightened, for her General, as Bourrienne said, was now "exaspéré au dernier point." For three days after his arrival he declined to see his wife at all, and declared he would at once obtain a divorce. Nevertheless, this conqueror, whom some have dared to brand as a heartless wretch, eventually yielded once again. Josephine, well realizing Bonaparte's intense affection for her children, Eugène and Hortense, presented herself with them at the door of her apparently unrelenting husband. Her calculations were well founded, and he eventually consented to let the children in. Their pleadings soon took effect. "Go and fetch your mother," said Bonaparte, and

peace was made. As he told Collot, he could not stand tears.

His forgiveness had only one reservation, which was that his wife should never see Charles again.

From this time forth Josephine, who, no doubt, had had a great fright, appears to have behaved with more circumspection ; and if she was ever again unfaithful, of which there is no proof, managed matters so that no scandal should reach her husband's ears.

Bonaparte not only pardoned Josephine, but made no effort to revenge himself upon her lover—he wiped the whole affair out of his memory. His forgiveness indeed was complete—the forgiveness of a great mind which knew its own moral failings and understood the failings of others.

Nevertheless, such an unpleasant affair impressed him with a profound distrust of women, and he seems to have formed the conviction that a husband, in order to guard his honour, must keep his wife watched night and day. Hence the almost Oriental régime which he afterwards applied in the case of Marie Louise.

With regard to Josephine, he knew such attempts would be useless ; all he could hope to do was to prevent any open scandal. Profoundly distrustful of her constancy, he nevertheless remained on the best

of terms with her. He knew she could never produce a son, and so with great philosophy and good nature, proceeded to pay her debts, and made the best of a very bad affair.

When he became Emperor, however, the lack of an heir weighed heavily upon his mind, and became a continual source of disappointment in a great measure augmented by the comments of the Bonaparte family, who were not well disposed towards the fascinating Creole.

The subject was ever in his mind, and sardonic utterances occasionally gave evidence of the mortification which he felt.

About to go out hunting in the park surrounding the Malmaison, his wife, who was very soft-hearted and humane, tearfully pleaded against such cruelty when the animals were about to breed. "Well then, I must give up my hunt," said Bonaparte; "tout ici est prolifique, excepté Madame." In vain Josephine frequented Aix, Plombières and Luxeuil, went pilgrimages and consulted doctors. Nature refused the much-desired heir to the master of continental Europe, with the result that his thoughts began to turn towards a divorce.

As early as the spring of 1804, after the Constitution of the new Empire had been adjusted, the question of such a separation had already been dis-

cussed. Overcome, however, by Josephine's tears and entreaties—for her charms still exercised a strong attraction for him—Napoleon, now omnipotent, revoked his threat, and even promised that she should be crowned Empress beside him in the cathedral of Notre-Dame.

With a view to making a separation impossible, Josephine confided in Pope Pius VII, who had come to Paris for the Coronation, that her marriage was only a civil contract, and that it had never been followed by a religious ceremony, upon which the Holy Father at once announced that the Coronation was not to take place until the marriage had received the sanction of the Church. The Emperor, though at first much annoyed, finally agreed to the Pope's wishes, and Cardinal Fesch performed the marriage ceremony on December 1, 1804; but still the idea of a divorce was never abandoned, and at the end of March 1808, Napoleon announced to the Empress his intention of obtaining it. Her tears and entreaties, however, moved him so deeply that he once more shrank from taking such a step. In 1809, however, he became inexorable, and prepared to carry the divorce through, in order to secure the heir so needed by the country. Nevertheless, he exhibited great emotion when the news was broken to his wife, lamenting the necessity of the separation

for a whole night by her side and bathing the bed in tears. When at last all hope was over, Josephine yielded to the inevitable, and at the Tuileries, on December 13, 1809, the Empress read out in a faltering voice the first lines of her declaration, wherein she consented to renounce all claim to the throne of France.

By the Emperor's express desire she retained the rank and title of crowned Empress-Queen, whilst a jointure of £80,000 a year was allotted to her, and she received three Palaces—the Élysée in Paris, a château de chasse in Navarre, and that domain of the Malmaison where the great Emperor had passed the few happy and peaceful days of an agitated life, and found the repose, so little of which he ever knew.

Though at various times Josephine had been a good deal at this Château, it was only in 1811, after the birth of the King of Rome, that her real return to it took place. Once again her finances were deeply involved, and she owed some 1,200,000 francs. "She must no longer count upon me," declared Napoleon. "I am only mortal, and more mortal than others!" Nevertheless he paid!

At that time, though still accorded the title of Empress Josephine, apart from her children and a number of ephemeral flatterers, had no longer any one really faithful to her, excepting her tradespeople.

After the divorce, her existence at the Malmaison, though luxurious, became somewhat dull, for she had to take care not to do anything likely to offend the Emperor. Here was brought the little Louis Napoleon, son of Hortense, who was afterwards to reign in that Palace of the Tuileries, on the site of which grass grows to-day.

Josephine adored children, and was godmother to half of the offspring of the villagers of Rueil.

Here also came Madame Walewska and her little son by Napoleon, with whom Josephine was delighted. Like most of those who had come in contact with the Man of Destiny, the hostess of the Malmaison appears to have accepted his dictum—

"I am not a man like the rest of humanity, and the laws of morality or convention are not made for me."

Her rule at the Malmaison might have been called a despotic reign of flowers, which even the nations at war with France acknowledged.

England, for instance, very gallantly sent the gentle Creole any rare plants when they were found on any French ships captured in transit.

With Josephine the love of flowers amounted to a craze; she loved them as it were with a veritable fury, and would pay any price for rare ones. Separation from her gardens was, to her, torture, and she

once burst out into tears before some rare tulips, exclaiming, "For two years I have been prevented from seeing them in bloom, owing to having been obliged to be by the side of Bonaparte just in their flowering season."

Rare plants were her hobby, and in her garden at the Malmaison flourished no less than 184 different species unknown at the Jardin des Plantes. Amongst these were several which were given names recalling the owners of the romantic domain. Such were the *Bonapartea*, the *Pageria* of Peru, the *Napoleone Imperiale* and the *Josephinia Imperatrix*. Sometimes Josephine would amuse herself planting trees. The day before the execution of the Duc d'Enghien she was casting some earth over the roots of a newly planted cypress. Mme. de Remusat, who knew of the coming tragedy, exclaimed, "Mon Dieu, Madame, this is just the tree to suit the day." Josephine, who did everything she could to save the ill-fated Prince, lay in tears beside Napoleon all night.

Besides her flowers the Empress had her pets, which, left in liberty, ranged about the parterres and lawns, whilst on the lake swam a black swan—that bird which, according to Juvenal, was so rare that there was nothing rarer—except a wise woman.

When the Emperor fell upon evil days Josephine, though no doubt affected, gave little outward sign

of grief. Her pleasure-loving nature could not withstand the excitement which followed the arrival of the allies in Paris in 1814, and, as ex-Empress, she took part in the festivities organized by the conquerors of her husband.

At the fêtes of May 14, at St. Leu, Josephine caught a bad cold. The allied sovereigns had to be received in a thin and low-cut gown, and on the 23rd and 24th, when really ill, she gave a state dinner at the Malmaison which caused her death. Though very unwell, she opened the ball which followed with the Emperor of Russia, went out with him into the park and took fresh cold. On the 26th her doctor caused a blister to be applied to her neck. "On this day, she was expected at the Tuileries to be presented to Louis XVIII."

But death prevented such an error of taste. On the 26th the illness had increased; on the 27th and 28th a consultation took place. During this night of agony the Empress was nursed by a strange maid, and became so much worse that in the morning the sacraments were administered to her. In delirium she murmured, "Napoleon . . . Isle of Elba," and passed away.

Thus was realized the fate of which Josephine often spoke, which had been predicted for her in her youth by an old negress of San Domingo—"that

she would become more than a queen, and would die in a hospital," for the Malmaison is said to have derived its name from having at one time been a shelter for Norman freebooters suffering from wounds or illness.

On March 20, 1815, Napoleon on his return from Elba, went a pilgrimage to the old Château, and entered the room in which Josephine had lain dead. After remaining there for a little time he was observed to leave with his eyes full of tears.

To the Malmaison he came once more for the last time after Waterloo, and here he passed a few brief days before setting out for exile. Wandering aimlessly in the grounds, a vanquished, broken man, he stopped before a bank covered with roses. "Poor Josephine," he exclaimed, "I cannot accustom myself to living here without her. I always seem to see her emerging from some walk to pick one of those flowers she loved so well. Certainly that was the most graceful woman I ever saw."

The Château, it should be added, after having been in close danger of demolition, is now safe: together with a portion of the grounds it was in 1902 purchased and presented to the French nation by the late M. Daniel Osiris, whose design of making it a museum of Napoleonic relics is being gradually carried into effect.

Necessary restorations have been effected with great restraint and taste; the garden, in which are many trees planted by Josephine, retains much of its attractions. The graceful spirit of its former mistress seems to pervade the place, and the Malmaison, despite time and change, still belongs to her as the Petit Trianon may be said still to belong to Marie Antoinette.

Josephine sleeps her last sleep close by in the little church of Rueil—that church the bells of which Napoleon declared always aroused emotion in his breast.

The tomb of Josephine is on the right-hand side of the chancel; in it is enshrined her kneeling effigy by Cartellier. Upon the base is inscribed—

À
JOSEPHINE
EUGÈNE ET HORTENSE
1826

Immediately opposite is the tomb of Queen Hortense with the inscription—

A LA REINE HORTENSE
SON FILS NAPOLÉON III

To the lover of the romance of history there is something indefinably pathetic about the last resting-place of this mother and daughter so fondly

devoted to one another. Both were sweet, wayward and capricious, and both were guilty of many follies, and even graver faults—both, nevertheless, were true incarnations of attractive femininity, and supreme in the art of pleasing.

In addition to this, Hortense Beauharnais, was in some degree a cultured woman; she painted prettily, and was possessed of musical talent. "Partant pour la Syrie," which for a time enjoyed a great vogue, and other romantic songs, was of her composition, though wicked people declared that Forbin wrote the words and Carbonnel the accompaniment.

The romance of her life was a secret liaison with Talleyrand's son by the Comtesse de Flahaut—Auguste Charles Joseph by name. This young man, born in April 1785, as it seemed under a lucky star, entered the Grande Armée and became aide-de-camp to the great Emperor. His curly hair, handsome eyes and winning manner procured him easy admission to all the fashionable boudoirs of the day, and won the admiration of Josephine, who praised Flahaut to Napoleon, adding that he possessed great wit. The Emperor resented so much adulation being heaped upon the young officer, whom, on account of his height, he called "Daddy-Long-Legs."

Hortense was completely captivated, and in 1810 a tender relationship was established between the two young people, in which Flahaut was not so much the wooer as the wooed—indeed, he glided easily to victory.

Married, for political reasons, against her inclinations to Louis Bonaparte, in spite of her affection for Duroc, she openly invited the adulation of men in general, and dashing soldiers in particular. Soon Flahaut was a constant attendant at every ball where the Queen of Holland happened to be present. At one of them Hortense and he led a fancy quadrille attired as Peruvians going to the temple of the sun. They danced together, strolled together, and sang together, their mutual affection being veiled by Flahaut under cover of brotherly affection. Though Hortense was not by any means an extraordinarily beautiful woman, the handsome officer was now really in love with her, and complete harmony prevailed between the amorous couple.

As a result of this liaison there was born on October 20, 1811, Auguste Charles Louis Joseph, registered as the child of Louise Emilie Coralie Fleury and Auguste Jean Hyacinthe de Morny, a landowner at San Domingo—both purely fictitious personages invented to save scandal. Flahaut himself, it should be added, never spoke at all of the

origin of the child, who afterwards became Duc de Morny, and for many reasons he studiously avoided any conversation which might recall his intimacy with Hortense.

Without any explanation, the infant made its appearance at the house of Flahaut's mother, then Madame de Souza, who lavished so much love and care upon it that some began to think it was a natural child of her own. Voluble enough about most matters, on this subject the lady preserved an unbroken silence, and while a few intimate friends knew the truth there was not one seems to have raised the veil of mystery, with the result that only during comparatively recent years has the real truth been known.

Owing, no doubt, to heredity, this child, when, after the *coup d'état*, he had risen to power as the Duc de Morny, showed great admiration for the fair sex, but his peccadilloes were always accompanied by a certain refinement and elegance, though his opinion of women—like that of many men who have had opportunities of realizing what their nature is—was not high. In love-making he seems to have been an expert, knowing how to select the proper moment to press his suit, whilst never being importunate or hasty. In his entanglements he continued to preserve independence, and his liaisons, as he him-

self said, might be compared to chains of flowers which a kindly fate unlinked with never a wrench or shock.

Morny was ever rather cautious of being fascinated by *demi-mondaines*, of whose shrewdness he entertained a salutary dread. Nevertheless, he was on the best of terms with some of them; but his partiality lay in the direction of passing pleasure, and the meteoric beauties in whose smiles he occasionally basked were soon forgotten. As middle age approached he openly declared that he looked forward to sailing into the peaceful creek of matrimony. The latter part of his career, when he held the reins of power under his half-brother, Napoleon III, has been admirably described by Alphonse Daudet in *Le Nabab*.

* * * * * *

Josephine had given Napoleon much trouble—he was determined that Marie Louise should not do the same. Owing to past experience, he had become imbued with some curious ideas as to the best method of ensuring a wife's fidelity; and, though for a time at least, quite captivated by his youthful bride, had her closely watched, giving orders that no man, whoever he might be, should for one instant be left alone with the Empress.

Nevertheless, he thoroughly realized that, unlike

all the other women with whom he had come in contact, the daughter of the Austrian Emperor could not be dominated and treated as a mere plaything. As a matter of fact, Napoleon found his bride a great deal more tractable than he had supposed. From her earliest infancy she had always looked upon her father's will as law, and thoroughly understood that her own personality must ever be subordinated to the interests of the Imperial household to which she belonged. It was, indeed, for this reason that she had accepted a marriage with the arrangement of which she had had nothing at all to do.

To do him justice, the Emperor made every effort to ensure his bride's happiness, but on certain points he was inflexible, and took the most stringent precautions, contriving a kind of Oriental system by means of which his young Empress was ever under the observation of a number of duennas, known as *femmes rouges*, who took the place of eunuchs in an Eastern harem, besides which a complicated code of etiquette, adopted from that formerly prevailing at Versailles, held her shackled in a sort of impenetrable bondage. If, however, he practically imprisoned Marie Louise in a gilded cage, he took care that it should be of the most sumptuous sort, and loaded her with priceless gifts

whilst arranging that as much as possible she should be kept amused.

The surveillance to which she was subjected did not at first incommode the young Empress, for at Schoenbrunn and Luxemburg extreme austerity had been her rule of life.

Every book she read had been subjected to a rigorous censorship, whole pages being here and there cut out, forming suggestive gaps, apt perhaps to make even a youthful Archduchess think!

All her pets—dogs, canaries, and the like—had been of one sex—males, whilst an old governess had always been in attendance upon her day and night. Consequently the somewhat stern régime prescribed at the Tuileries and St. Cloud did not seem to her very galling or extraordinary.

Marie Louise had received a good education, and could prattle in several languages with some fluency; great care had been devoted to teaching her, and she probably possessed as much knowledge as most young ladies of the present day. As a girl, one of the presents she received was a book called *Le Plutarque de la Jeunesse*, a series of lives of great men from Homer to Bonaparte, and, quite unconscious of her fate, she wrote to a friend, "This last name spoils the book." In another letter she spoke of a funny thing she had heard, which was

that M. Bonaparte had become a Turk. Early in January 1810, she wrote to her favourite governess: "I am sorry for the poor Princess whom he (Napoleon) chooses; I am certain that I shall not be the victim," nevertheless, she made not the slightest demur about agreeing to marry the victor of Wagram.

Though Marie Louise had been brought up to regard the name of Bonaparte with horror, and had married Napoleon merely from reasons of State, which she scarcely understood, he seems to have been anything but repulsive to her, from a physical point of view

As for the Emperor, he was delighted with his bride of eighteen, to please whom he indulged in all sorts of games, which in reality bored him to death. The young Empress was particularly fond of billiards, which she played better than Napoleon, who, in order not to be perpetually beaten, took lessons from one of his chamberlains. Marie Louise possessed several minor social accomplishments, besides being able to perform a feat of which she was immensely proud. This consisted in the power to move an ear, the muscle of which must have been of unusual development.

She was not really in love with Napoleon; and in later years used to declare that she

never had the least romantic feeling about him. Flighty and frivolous, she was quite incapable of understanding his character or realizing that, like Cæsar or Alexander, his name was destined to be inscribed on the roll of lasting fame.

The frivolity and egotism of the character of Marie Louise may be gathered from the remark she made to M. de St. Aulaire when he came to tell her of the fall of the Empire and Napoleon's attempted suicide at Fontainebleau. The Empress was but just awake, and sat at the side of the bed with her bare feet showing from beneath the coverlet. M. de St. Aulaire, as the bearer of such sad and important news, stood with his eyes cast down. "Ah!" said Marie Louise, "you are looking at my feet; I am always being told how pretty they are."

Loving pleasure and hating affairs of State, she was ready to sacrifice everything to personal inclination. For this reason she occupies but a poor place in history.

Whilst she appears to have felt no repulsion for Napoleon as a man, she took no pleasure in being by his side. As she herself once said, she liked him best of all when he was away. On the other hand, Neipperg, her lover and second husband, completely won the Empress's somewhat frivolous heart.

Her intrigue with him began in 1814, when she

was setting out on a journey to Aix under the pseudonym of the "Duchess of Colorno," which name she took from one of her future country houses. Travelling through Switzerland, she was met at Carrouge, near Geneva, by a dashing General of Hussars, thirty-nine years old—Adam, Count von Neipperg, recommended by Prince Schwarzenberg to conduct the ex-Empress to her destination. Neipperg seems to have met Marie Louise three times before, though only for a few moments. The first occasion was in March 1810, when she had passed through Strasburg on her wedding journey; and the two next in the summer of the same year, in Paris, at the great festivities held in honour of the new Empress.

Count von Neipperg belonged to the old Austrian nobility, and as a young officer he had served against the French; in one combat indeed he had received a severe sabre wound, a slash across the right side of his face which disfigured him for life, without, however, prejudicing him in the eyes of the fair sex.

Nevertheless, this sword cut caused Neipperg to nurture an intense hatred for the French, and particularly for their leader, upon whom he concentrated his feelings of malignity. So much was this the case that, though the Count was a comparatively

obscure officer, Napoleon himself wrote in 1808 that Neipperg was an enemy to be taken note of.

Neipperg, it should be added, had won the hearts of many women, and was a sort of Austrian Don Juan, who had eloped at thirty with a lady whom he eventually married in order to legitimatize five children which she had borne him.

The first impression Neipperg made upon Marie Louise is said to have been highly unfavourable, and she appears to have regarded him as a secret informer and spy to prevent communication with her husband.

As a matter of fact, such an idea was pretty close to the truth, for Neipperg was instructed to watch for letters between the ex-Empress and Napoleon. Further, in his orders it was laid down that "Count Neipperg will carefully seek to alienate the Duchess of Colorno from any idea of a journey to Elba, which could not fail to fill the paternal heart of his Majesty the Emperor with the tenderest anxiety for the well-being of a beloved daughter; he is to leave no means untried to divert her from her purpose, at all events he is to endeavour to gain time, so that decisive information may reach his Majesty; but in the worst case, supposing all remonstrances should be in vain, he is to follow the Duchess of Colorno to the Island of Elba."

This dislike of Marie Louise, however, did not last long, for five days after her arrival in Aix she wrote to her father: "Count Neipperg is most attentive to me, and his manner pleases me very much." One of those characters on whom the impression of the present totally effaces the memory of the past, she had no vestige of that greatness of soul which distinguished her grandmother, Queen Caroline of Naples. In Neipperg she found a guide who well understood how to attach her to himself, and she surrendered willingly to his fascination. Devoid of any feeling of ambition, she readily decided to pass her existence with this General, who appealed to her nature in a way Napoleon had never been able to do.

Love for the Austrian officer indeed quite banished all thought of the Emperor from her mind.

Of his death she learnt long after most people in Vienna, and when she read the news in the Piedmont paper of July 14th, at first did not believe it. "I confess," wrote she, when on at last realizing the authenticity of the announcement, "that the news affected me greatly, although I never had a very intense feeling of any kind for him. Still, I can never forget that he was the father of my son, and that far from ill-treating me, as all the world supposes, he was always full of consideration for

me, which is all that can be expected from a marriage of policy. Therefore I am greatly grieved; and although one may be glad that he ended his unhappy existence in a Christian way, I could have still wished him many years of life and prosperity, provided he had kept apart from me."

The manner in which Marie Louise acted with regard to the memory of the dead Emperor proves how utterly she was lacking in appreciation of his undying fame. Everything was done to obscure the fact that the exile of St. Helena had once been ruler of the French.

The official account issued at Parma merely spoke of him as "the most Serene Consort of an august Princess," and Marie Louise herself forbade the name of Napoleon to be used in the prayers for the dead. The priest was to employ the formula especially prescribed. The memorial service, to which no one received an invitation, was commanded to be given, therefore, in the palace chapel at Sala. In the middle of the chapel, which was draped in black, without any special pomp, stood the bier, bare of every insignia of Imperial state. She had, however, the good taste to insist upon attending mass for the repose of the soul of him who was father to her child, accompanied by a number of members of her Court.

The meeting of Marie Louise with Neipperg was certainly fortunate for both. A man of considerable intelligence he was the best of husbands and the most faithful of friends, besides which he was an able administrator. At Parma he improved every branch of the public service, and did much for the State over which Marie Louise ruled.

As for Napoleon's thoughtless ex-Consort, she busied herself little with the affairs of her small dominions, devoting a good part of her time to the composition of dinners which she ate with hearty appetite, roast beef and horse-radish sauce being her favourite dish.

Her son by Neipperg, born in 1821, received from the Emperor of Austria the title of Comte de Montenuovo (changed to Prince in 1864), and grew up to be a gallant soldier and a man of great cultivation and charming manners, who was long a popular figure in Vienna. He died as recently as 1895, leaving descendants amongst the Austrian aristocracy.

Over her other son, the Duc de Reichstadt, the child of the great Emperor, Neipperg curiously enough exercised great influence, and he it was who incited the Prince to study the Emperor's glorious deeds.

Though this youth—l'Aiglon as he has been

called—was supposed to have been entangled in love affairs, there is no reliable evidence for believing that such was ever the case. In all probability this ill-fated Prince's amours were limited to a flirtation with two fascinating countesses, whilst the story of his infatuation for the charming dancer, Fanny Elsler, would appear to have been a pure fiction originated by the circumstance that the Duc was in the habit of sending his servant to the house of the danseuse when he wished to find certain friends of his, who passed much of their time with this light of Terpsichore.

Fanny Elsler herself stoutly denied ever having any relations with the son of Marie Louise and Napoleon, and Count Prokesch, who of all people should have been in a position to know, having been on intimate terms with the fair dancer, assured Napoleon the Third that all rumours to such an effect were entirely without foundation.

Nevertheless, after the death of the Duc de Reichstadt, it was widely reported that his premature demise had been hastened by the dissipations into which the fair danseuse had drawn him, and she was subjected to criticism of a very unpleasant kind.

One admirer, a rich and eccentric young Englishman, paid great court to her, and, having showered

a profusion of presents and promised more, was eventually granted leave to visit her. Admitted to the house of this beautiful woman, he took a comprehensive survey of her charms, after which he remarked in execrable French, "Thank you very much. I am glad to have seen the grave of the Duc de Reichstadt," took his hat and stick, and walked straight out of the house.

The fair Fanny, however, was, it is said, in a great measure consoled for the insult by a roll of notes which he had taken care to leave behind him.

The halo of romance which lingered around the son of the great Napoleon not unnaturally led to all sorts of stories as to his amorous inclinations, and poets went so far as to represent him as having been the victim of passionate love. Further even than this, he was provided with children.

An echo of such a fiction is to be found in the Chemnitz *Allgemeine Anzeiger* of December 18, 1900, in which Clara Ludwig, *née* Wendt, announced the death of her husband, the "Master-tailor," Ludwig Bonaparte, on December 17, at the age of sixty-eight. This master-tailor pretended to be an illegitimate son of the Duc de Reichstadt by a certain Frau von Reitzenberg. As a matter of fact, if he was really sixty-eight in the year 1900, he

must have been born in 1832, after the death of the Duc. Some have actually credited his marriage.

Like the unfortunate Louis XVII, "l'Aiglon" has been given legitimate descendants. In Wurzbach's *Biographical Dictionary*, a teacher at Warnsdorf, near Wurzen, Saxony, is mentioned as the Duc's legitimate son by his marriage with a Hungarian Countess. The marriage in question is supposed to have taken place on an estate situated near Debreczen. The Prince, however, never went farther than Pozsony (Pressburg), and therefore can never have been in Debreczen, or in its neighbourhood. This teacher, in a petition he addressed to the Embassy of Saxony, in Vienna, asking that his baptismal certificate should be delivered to him, actually signed himself "Prince Eugène Joseph Napoléon Bonaparte."

The Duc de Reichstadt, like his great father, died during a storm (July 22, 1832). His last breath was drawn amidst terrific peals of thunder, whilst a flash of lightning struck one of the Imperial eagles on the roof of the palace of Schoenbrunn—it was but fitting, said the superstitious, that the death of Napoleon's son should be heralded by a discharge of heavenly artillery.

VII

Bonaparte in Egypt—His Cleopatra—Madame Fourès—Her curious History—Mademoiselle George—The Italian Singer, La Grassini—Her remark as to Wellington, another of her Lovers—The La Vallière of the Emperor, the beautiful Walewska—How Napoleon won her Love—Her Devotion and Patriotic Zeal—Fidelity to the Emperor after his Fall—Visit to Elba—Marriage and Death—Napoleon at Rousseau's Tomb

IT is probable that Napoleon's extreme tenderness for Josephine was prompted, not only by affection, but by a superstition that she was in some way associated with the continuance of his wonderful career.

"They speak," she would tell him, "of your star, but it is really mine which sways your destiny," and her words undoubtedly influenced a mind somewhat prone to take account of omens, portents, and the like.

Be this as it may, once his eyes were opened to her inclinations towards gallantry his whole behaviour altered, and though on leaving for Egypt he seems to have been animated by feelings of real regret, he no longer made any pretence of being faithful to her once he had reached the banks of the Nile. Her adventure with Lieutenant Charles at

Milan had deeply impressed his mind. Before the proof of her easy morality had been brought prominently before him, he had rigorously adhered to the path of conjugal rectitude, but, having found that she was not so scrupulous in fulfilling her marital obligations, he determined in future to do as he pleased.

Unlike many of his officers, he was not at all attracted by any of the native women, but at the Tivoli Égyptien—a pleasure resort established by one of his old schoolfellows at Brienne on Parisian lines—he met a pretty little blonde—the reigning beauty amongst a number of European women who had contrived to follow the French army across the seas. This was Madame Fourès, generally known as Bellilote, originally a little milliner at Carcassonne, who had married a dashing Lieutenant of Chasseurs. During their honeymoon he received orders to embark for Egypt, and, in order not to be separated from her husband, she had arrayed herself in the uniform of a Chasseur à Cheval.

At Cairo she had resumed the dress of her sex, and though surrounded by numberless admirers, had behaved with much propriety; indeed, she and her husband were regarded as a model couple.

Bonaparte, however, was soon successful where many others had failed, and though at first the lady

was prudish as to accepting his advances, a few protestations of devotion, some ardent letters and costly presents made her alter her mind, and in a short time her husband received orders to carry some despatches to Paris, and afterwards return to Damietta.

On the evening of the day on which Fourès sailed, Bonaparte gave a dinner to several other ladies, allotted Madame Fourès the seat next his own, upset a bottle of water over her dress, and at once insisted upon her retiring to his private apartments in order that he might strive to repair the effects of his awkwardness.

A few days later, by the orders of the General, a house near the palace he was occupying was hastily furnished and the lady installed in it, when the totally unexpected return of her husband created a scandal.

The vessel on which he had sailed had been captured by a British ship, and the English, who knew what was going on at Cairo, maliciously, it was said, had sent Fourès back there on condition he should not again bear arms during the war.

The already humiliated soldier was infuriated on discovering what had been going on, and appears to have treated his wife with some brutality. As a result of which a divorce was pro-

nounced by one of the military officials who had power to deal with such matters. The disconsolate husband was then once again sent off to France, every effort being made to facilitate his journey.

Madame Fourès now resumed her maiden name of Bellisle, and, installed as the reigning favourite, did the honours at General Bonaparte's palace, where she received his officers, and such French ladies as were with the army.

She now drove about openly with her lover, an aide-de-camp galloping by the side of their carriage, Eugène de Beauharnais, son of Josephine, taking his turn with the others. At times she would appear in a splendid General's uniform, a gold-laced cocked hat surmounted by tricolour plumes on her pretty little head. "Voilà notre Générale," cried the soldiers, who were delighted with their Cleopatra, as some of the officers had nicknamed Bonaparte's beautiful mistress.

As for her General, whose miniature she wore even in public, hanging from her neck, he was for a time delighted with her, and, it is said, would have then and there divorced Josephine to make her his wife, had Bellilote shown any signs of giving him an heir.

When he returned to France he gave orders that the lady should join him as soon as possible, and

left a thousand louis for her journey, but Kléber, who succeeded to the command, considering Bellilote as part of the official household of the General in chief, placed every obstacle in the way of her departure. Eventually, however, she did set out, but the *America*, on which she sailed, being captured by the English, she only reached Paris after Bonaparte had become First Consul, in which position he felt it necessary to make some show of morality, besides which, people who are very agreeable abroad are not always welcome at home; and so, from one cause or another, Madame Fourès soon had reason to perceive that the liaison was at an end.

Nevertheless, ever generous to women with whom he had had anything to do, Bonaparte gave her large sums of money, and did all he could to facilitate her marriage with a former officer of infantry, M. de Rauchoup, who, in 1800, was appointed subcommissioner of foreign affairs at Santander, being transferred to Cartagena a few years later. The climate of this port, however, did not suit his wife, who wrote direct to the Emperor to grant her what she called "a last petition," and succeeded in obtaining for her husband the consulate of Gothenburg in Sweden, to which country, however, she took care not to go.

Installing herself in a fine suite of rooms in Paris,

in the Rue Napoléon, she embarked upon a somewhat free and extravagant career of pleasure, receiving a number of wealthy foreigners—mostly Russians, such as Narishkin and Demidoff. Two Frenchmen also figured as acceptable admirers at this period—these were Paulin, the aide-de-camp of General Bertrand, and Peyrusse, brother of the Imperial Treasurer. Meanwhile, she made every effort to come in contact with the Emperor, who was by no means anxious to revive a liaison of the past. In vain she frequented every place of entertainment where an interview might possibly be obtained. She only got an interview with him once at a masked ball, where, recognizing his steel-grey domino, she contrived to enter upon a conversation, which he soon cut short. Nevertheless, the Emperor sent his old flame 60,000 francs the next day.

Madame Rauchoup, though herself an intelligent woman of some literary pretensions (about this time she was writing a novel called *Lord Wentworth*), had a great fancy for handsome, stupid men—she herself said, "I like fine beasts."

Owing to her intrigue with Paulin, she was eventually separated from her husband, after which her life became more unconventional than ever, with the result that in 1816 she found herself in straight-

ened circumstances. The downfall of the Emperor —always lavish with funds where any former mistress was concerned—had probably much to do with this. Possessed of a fair share of that commercial aptitude which distinguishes so many Frenchwomen, Madame Rauchoup then betook herself to Brazil in company with M. Bellard, an old officer of the Grande Armée. Beyond the seas she made a certain amount of money, principally by careful trading in French furniture, with the result that, in 1825, she was once more able to settle down in Paris. The Bourbons were in power, and for this and some other obscure reason she did all she could to conceal her Napoleonic connection.

In a comfortable, though modest, set of rooms in the Rue Ville d'Évêque, generally surrounded by a number of pets—birds and monkeys which she delighted in seeing at liberty—the Comtesse de Rauchoup, as in her latter years she styled herself, passed a comfortable and happy old age. She wrote another novel, painted and collected pictures, played the harp, and enjoyed the friendship of a number of clever people, one of whom was Rosa Bonheur.

At her death in 1869 at the age of ninety-two, she bequeathed pictures to the museum at Blois. The majority are copies of the old Italian school,

of Boucher and other great masters. She had burnt all the letters written to her by the great man, with whom, more than seventy years before, she had caracolled over the sands of Egypt. Indeed, it seemed as if her main desire had been entirely to obliterate all recollection of the distant days when the soldiers of Bonaparte had acclaimed her blonde beauty, and vaunted the charms of Bellilote—the Queen of the East.

Another favourite who, if she did not capture Napoleon's heart, strongly appealed to him from a sensual point of view, was Mlle. George, an actress who made her appearance on the stage in 1802, when sixteen years old. Her first protector was Prince Sappia, who put her and her family beyond the reach of want. She also captivated Lucien Bonaparte, but he laid siege to her heart in vain, though he made many ardent protestations of love.

His brother Napoleon, a more practical lover, made use of less sentimental methods, with immediate success.

In 1857, when an old woman, the actress committed to paper some recollections of her relations with her great lover, but slight reliance can be placed upon some of her statements, which convey the impression that Napoleon regarded his liaison with her in a more serious light than in reality would

appear to have been the case. His first meeting with her was scarcely romantic.

Napoleon admired tragedy; in his opinion, as he told Goethe, it should be the school of kings and peoples.

An admirer of everything great, he was fond of the demi-gods of Racine and the heroes of Corneille, who, like himself, rose superior to the ordinary level of human nature.

"Tragedy," said he, "warms the soul, elevates the heart, should and does create heroes. If Corneille were alive I would make him a Prince."

With such a taste he naturally went often to the Comédie Française.

One night (Nivôse, an X), after Mlle. George had been playing in *Andromaque*, a valet presented himself at the door of her dressing-room and announced that his master, the First Consul, awaited Hermione (the part the lady had been playing) at St. Cloud. Mlle. George does not appear to have dreamt of raising any objections to going. On the contrary, she felt proud that, like Cleopatra, she had the conqueror of the world at her feet. She reached St. Cloud at half-past twelve, and remained till six the next morning.

Bonaparte was not always a gentle lover; on this occasion she herself declares him to have been violent,

but charming. He tore to pieces a veil given her by Prince Sappia, and told her that she had ugly feet, "des abatis canailles." Nevertheless, he was charmed, for, besides being superbly beautiful, she amused him by her chatter about theatrical matters and people. Josephine heard of the affair, but Bonaparte made light of it, declaring that mere distractions which did not touch his affections were not worth troubling about.

Nevertheless, after this he took care to keep his liaison with the actress very secret. When she came to act before the Court she was treated exactly the same way as the rest of the company. He allowed her to take no liberties; and when one day she asked for his portrait brusquely produced a double napoleon, and, handing it to her said, "There it is, I am told it is like."

According to one account Bonaparte, during the course of an evening when Mlle. George was with him at St. Cloud, had a fit. The actress shouted for help, and Josephine and a crowd of officials flocked into the room. The First Consul when he came to flew into a furious passion, turned his mistress out of the palace half naked, and caused her to leave for St. Petersburg next morning. Such a story, however, was probably a fiction; in any case, when she returned to Paris after 1812, Napo-

leon ordered that no notice should be taken of her having broken the contract with the Théâtre Français, and her long period of absence was by his orders overlooked, much to the disgust of the rest of the company. He was always very generous towards Mlle. George, and during the hundred days, when he had long ceased to have any relations with her, sent her 20,000 francs.

The actress, to her great credit, always remained a staunch adherent to the Napoleonic cause, and, after the fall of the Emperor, was actually dismissed from the Comédie Française for appearing with a bouquet of violets (the Imperial flower) in her corsage.

As an old woman her voice trembled with real emotion when she spoke of the Emperor, to whom she alluded with a sort of respectful pride, as one who had been caressed by a god.

One day, in very straightened circumstances, she went to the Ministry of the Imperial Household to make some request.

It chanced to be just the time for changing the guard, and as the drums beat to arms Napoleon III appeared on the terrace. The old actress went to the window to see the spectacle, and, turning round, her eyes were observed to be full of tears.

"Ah!" she said, "I have often seen that in former times—*sous l'autre!*"

She died in 1867, and was buried in the cemetery of Père La Chaise at the expense of Napoleon III, who seems seldom to have forgotten those who enjoyed the favour of his uncle.

Another actress, who for a short time found favour with Napoleon, was the Italian singer Giueseppina Grassini, who attracted his attention by her singing at the fêtes given at Milan to celebrate the triumph of Marengo.

Wellington also had a temporary liaison with this singer, and in after years she would speak very freely of her relations with the two great Captains, exhibiting a snuff-box, given her (she said) by Napoleon, with considerable pride. "Ah!" she would exclaim, "what a pity he did not listen to me and let me patch up matters with *ce cher Villainton!*" Any negotiations of the sort, however, would have been attended with considerable difficulty, for the fair songstress and the Iron Duke understood each other very imperfectly. Nevertheless, according to all accounts, they passed some pleasant hours together.

Amongst numerous other intrigues of Bonaparte, he had, in 1804, a liaison with a young lady whose husband was attached to the Consular Court.

Josephine resented this attachment very strongly, having some idea that her husband was going to copy Louis XIV, and give the lady the position of an acknowledged mistress.

Napoleon, however, had no intention of doing this, and, eventually tiring of the *amourette*, actually besought Josephine to assist him in ending it.

Nevertheless, he always continued to treat the woman who had temporarily captivated him with the greatest consideration, both she and her husband (who never learnt the truth), being given positions of honour at the Imperial Court.

The lady, it should be added, was quite disinterested in this love affair, for she would not accept even the smallest gift of jewellery from Napoleon, and when fortune had deserted him was one of the few who showed devotion and fidelity. After Waterloo she betook herself to the Malmaison in order to express her unswerving respect and devotion for the fallen Emperor before he set out on the journey which was to end in perpetual exile.

The real romance of Napoleon's life was his liaison with the beautiful Polish Countess Walewska. It was in 1807, at Bronie in Poland, that he first saw this charming woman, who has not inaptly been called his "La Vallière." During a halt an enthusiastic crowd had surrounded the Imperial carriage,

and whilst Duroc was clearing a way a feminine voice, speaking French, begged to be allowed a glimpse of the Emperor. The Marshal continued to make his way to the speaker, whom he found to be a pretty young lady. Taking her by the hand, he led her to the door where Napoleon stood.

"Sire," said he, "here is a lady who has braved the dangers of the crowd for you." The Emperor, bending forwards, murmured some compliment, to which the fair one, in a veritable fever of excitement, replied by expressing her joy at being allowed to welcome one who was about to raise up her country. Taking a bouquet, which was in his carriage, the Emperor then said, "Accept this as a pledge of my good intentions. I hope we shall meet again at Warsaw, when I shall claim my thanks from your beautiful lips."

The beautiful and attractive blonde who had run such risks to welcome him whom she believed to be the liberator of her country was Marie Walewska, born of a poor but ancient family. One of six children, this lovely young girl had been married to a wealthy noble—Anastase de Walewice-Walewski, seventy years old, a widower, enormously rich, and of stern temper. For three years after her marriage she had languished in her husband's gloomy château, religion forming her only consolation; but a son

being born, she became ardently patriotic, animated by the desire that he might grow up to see Poland once more free. It was for this reason that she had been so anxious to welcome Napoleon, who, to patriotic Poles, seemed to be the saviour of their native land.

On his arrival at Warsaw the Emperor, mindful of the beautiful face he had seen on his way, at once gave instructions that the Countess Walewska should be invited to a ball given by Prince Joseph Poniatowski. At first she declined to go, but the great nobles of Poland were so anxious to gratify every wish of their Imperial visitor, that great pressure being brought to bear by all the Polish aristocracy, including her husband, who positively ordered his wife not to offend the Emperor, the Countess eventually consented. Reaching the ball in a state of great agitation, the beautiful Pole showed considerable nervousness, kept silent, and refused to dance. The Emperor, for his part, when he heard she had arrived, was very much agitated, and strode about the ballroom saying the wrong thing to the wrong people. He asked a young girl who was just out how many children she had; inquired of a withered old maid if her husband was as jealous as ever, and told a woman of enormous bulk that he could see she was devoted to dancing.

Then suddenly, coming face to face with her who had captivated his heart, he observed her nervous demeanour with disapproval, and said, alluding to her dress, "Le blanc sur le blanc ne va pas, Madame." Then, in a softer voice, "This is not the welcome I expected from you." She answered not a word, and he passed on.

When, however, she had reached home she found a note, evidently scribbled in hot haste: "I saw but you, admired but you, and desire but you. A very speedy reply to the impatient ardour of—N."

"There is no answer," she told Prince Poniatowski, who was waiting below, and the latter, after half-an-hour's furious remonstrance, went away crestfallen.

Early next morning another note arrived, which, with the first, she directed should be sent back by its bearer.

To make a long story short, the resistance of this girl of eighteen to the Master of Europe actually scandalized her countrymen and countrywomen, who, making use of all sorts of arguments, the chief and most successful one the salvation of Poland, at last persuaded the beautiful Countess to go to a dinner given by the Emperor, who, on seeing her said, with considerable delicacy, "I hear Madame has been ill. I hope she is now

quite recovered." At this dinner she was seated next Duroc, whom in conversation she told that she was keeping the Emperor's bouquet for her son. "I adore nothing but flowers," added she, upon which the Grand Maréchal adroitly replied: "Well, we are going to gather laurels for you on your native soil."

Later, in the adjoining salon, the Emperor came up to her, and, casting upon her his eagle gaze, pressed her hand, whilst he murmured some gentle but significant words in her ear.

Directly he left the side of the beautiful Countess, the other guests thronged around, declaring that the Emperor had had eyes but for her, she alone would be able to plead for Poland with success, and cause the Man of Destiny to re-establish its nationality.

Duroc was particularly pressing, and in soft tones begged her not to repulse one who had never supported a rebuff—one whose glory was accompanied by sorrows which she alone was able to change into joys. A lady standing by, here interposed, saying that Comtesse Walewska would certainly consent to grant the Emperor a rendezvous. The Countess, in tears, declared she would not; upon which her friend denounced her as being unpatriotic and no true Pole, otherwise she would do anything for Napoleon; at the same time she read out a note

from the Emperor, full of ardent passion, brought by Duroc, and, yielding to the overwhelming influence brought to bear upon her gentle, feminine mind, the object of Napoleon's passion at last murmured, "Do with me what you will."

The next evening, Countess Walewska was introduced by a secret entrance into the Palace, where, in a half-fainting condition, she found herself alone with her Imperial lover.

According to his wont, Napoleon, who, on this occasion moderated his usual tone of domination, questioned her at some length. Why did she marry her old husband, surely for rank and wealth? Was she forced into the match?—and so forth. Finally, had she no regrets? To which, bursting into tears, she retorted, that a couple bound together on earth could only be unbound in heaven. This made Napoleon laugh, upon which she cried more than ever.

Calming her, he then proceeded to ask further questions as to her family and daily life; and a knock at the door indicating that a carriage had come to take his fair visitor away, he helped her to put on her cloak and conducted her to the door. "Good-night, my sweet, sorrowing dove," said he. "Be not afraid of the eagle, who will employ against you but the forces of passionate

love—of a love which above all aspires to your heart. You will end by loving him, mark you, for he will be yours alone," and, his hand on the lock of the door, he made her swear that she would return on the morrow.

The next morning the Countess received a large packet. In it were rare flowers and laurel leaves and a magnificent string of diamonds, which the fair recipient, enraged at the thought that she could be bought, threw to the other end of her room, declaring they should be sent back at once. There was also a sealed note full of passion, begging her to accept the bouquet of flowers and wear it that night at dinner. "When," wrote Napoleon, "you see my hand over my heart, you will remember that it is yours alone, and by way of reply, press this bouquet over your own."

She went to the dinner but did not wear the bouquet, which, with the diamonds, she returned; nevertheless, when she saw the Emperor coming towards her, she was so much moved by emotion, that she placed her hand on her heart where the bouquet should have been. The Emperor, who had entered the room singularly stern, abandoned his frowns, and, his eyes resting lovingly upon her, responded by a similar action.

That night, according to her promise, she found

herself once more alone with Napoleon, who was in a very determined mood. Why, asked he, had she refused his flowers? Why did she seek him out at Bronie and inspire a love which she did not share? The usual Polish character, he supposed! Enthusiastic, impulsive, frivolous and unreliable! "I," said he, "have revivified your country, the very name of which only exists thanks to me, and perhaps I may do more for it. Realize, however, that, like this watch which I hold in my hands, which I now smash to atoms (here he threw the watch on the floor and ground it to bits under his heel), should you drive me to extremes by repelling my love and refusing me your own, Poland shall be crushed, and all its hopes perish."

The violence of the Emperor, whose wonderful eyes were all afire, made such an impression upon the beautiful Pole, that she fell down in a faint. When she came to, she found herself in his arms, and that evening the liaison began.

Countess Walewska had resisted the great soldier's advances for five days, by far the longest period any woman had ever ventured to repel his love. Real patriotism played a great part in causing her to give way. Also, it must be remembered that every one in Poland urged her not to offend the sovereign whom they considered to

be their only hope. Indeed, it is said that the most prominent men in the country sent her a signed letter, appealing to her love for the country which had given her birth.

In the eyes of the Poles, who at that time were imbued with free ideas and Voltairean scepticism, Napoleon was a man of great chastity, for he took no harem with him and had repulsed the advances of their womenkind of all classes, who, almost without exception, had flung themselves at his head. They were, consequently, delighted to hear that the Countess had given way. They regarded her, indeed, as a sort of Polish Queen, and acclaimed her lapse from virtue as the greatest honour possible. Her husband, however, appears to have been somewhat annoyed, but even he took no serious steps. Perhaps, like Molière, he was of opinion that—

> "Dans un partage avec Jupiter il n'y a rien du tout qui déshonore."

His sisters, the Princess Jablonowska and the Comtesse Birginska, were constantly at the Countess's side, whilst she could have ruled Polish society like a Queen, had she cared to do so. But beyond appearing at State functions by the Emperor's command, she preferred to efface herself. The one hope of Poland—the

incarnation of all that was most amiable, generous and attractive in the national character—her energies now became concentrated upon making Napoleon carry out the promises which he had given with respect to her beloved country.

In reply he would bid her be patient till the political situation would warrant him in fulfilling her wishes, whilst pointing out that any premature action would lessen the chances of a permanent independence.

His love for his beautiful mistress—his adored Marie—meanwhile increased, and he could not bear to be separated from her. Far from tiring of her, as he had tired of so many women, he was, to some degree, subjected by her gentle influence, and his curious nature softened beneath her smiles, for she realized the feminine ideal which he had once hoped to find in Josephine.

When her Imperial lover went to Finkenstein the couple were much alone together, and she began to reciprocate his affection. So much was this the case that when Napoleon left Poland, without having carried out his promises as to its freedom, not being able to support a separation, she followed him to Paris in 1808, and to Vienna in the following year. Here every evening a carriage bore her to Schoenbrunn. In 1810 was born Alexandre Florian Joseph

Colonna Walewski, who, as every one knows, had a brilliant career. Soldier, writer, and diplomatist, he was no unworthy child of a great father.

After Napoleon's marriage to Marie Louise, the beautiful Pole still continued to receive his visits or to visit him secretly in the Palace of the Tuileries, where a special staircase was ever at her disposal. When Marie Louise, the official wife, had retired, the real object of the Emperor's affections arrived to shut out for a few hours the numberless cares which beset the Imperial brow.

She now loved the Emperor passionately. "Quand tu cesseras de m'aimer, n'oublie pas que je t'aime," were the words engraved on a hollow gold ring containing a lock of her hair which she gave him.

"All my inspirations," said she, "are from him and return to him—he is everything to me—my future and my life!"

When evil days began to dawn, Walewska gave proof of her devotion. She hastened to Fontainebleau after the abdication, but was unable to see him; but when he had reached Elba, she wrote, craving permission to go to him, and Napoleon consented to her wish. Marie Louise, the lawful wife, no longer made any pretence of interest in the fallen eagle; considering what human nature is, there can be little

cause for surprise; though he had always treated her with the greatest consideration, love had never entered into the marriage, whereas it was an ardent bond of union between Napoleon and the beautiful Walewska. On her arrival with her son at Porto Ferrajo, she was taken for the Empress, a mistake which aroused the anger of the Imperial exile, who had desired that the visit might be a secret one. This irritation soon, however, passed away, and he fell into her arms. "Why," said she, "would you not see me at Fontainebleau? I would have comforted you." "Alas," replied the Emperor, touching his forehead, "I had so many things here."

The lovers, for they were lovers still, went up in the mountains at Marciana Alta, and lived in a little hermitage. Their hut—for it is little else—is still in existence, and together with a rudely carved rock called "The Emperor's Throne," makes Marciana Alta a place of pilgrimage for visitors fascinated by the Napoleonic legend.

In a tent by day and in the hermitage by night, the Emperor, his mistress, and their child stayed for forty-eight hours, their senses lulled into a restful lassitude by the distant murmur of the waves washing against the rocks below. Across the sea Napoleon was able to point out the dim outline of Corsica, his natal isle, and in this wild but beautiful

spot he who had changed the map of Europe, intoxicating men and nations with glory, and caused them to follow him like sheep to the mad carnage of the battlefield, played peacefully with his little son.

At the end of two days, however, to avoid scandal, the Emperor was forced to tell his mistress to depart. Already the people of Porto Ferrajo were making preparations to receive the supposed Empress, and delay was impossible.

The final parting took place in the tent during a storm, and when the last embraces were over, the Emperor turned silently away, mounted his horse and rode inland towards La Madone, whilst Walewska went down to the sea-shore, where waited her brother. The spot had been specially chosen to avoid attracting attention, but the fury of the storm at the place of embarkation effectually prevented any attempt at putting to sea, which the Emperor, seeing the height of the waves, also forbade by an aide-de-camp whom he sent off in hot haste. Eventually, however, the Countess set out from a neighbouring bay, and in the face of a heavy tempest the ship which bore her sailed for France.

She was to see him again during the hundred days. The news of his escape from Elba sent by himself reached her as she was at a ball, and, hasten-

ing to Paris, she was foremost amongst the women who showed him unwavering devotion.

When, however the *Bellerophon* had borne the great Emperor to his island prison across the seas, not unnaturally, as her lover was in perpetual exile and her old husband dead, she accounted herself free, and in 1816 married a hero of the Grande Armée, Général Count d'Ornano, a cousin of Napoleon, who had commanded the dragoons of the guard. Her wedded life was but short, for she died the next year after bearing a child.

The exile of Longwood, it should be added, was very much affected when he heard of this marriage. It was part of his dominating temperament to resent a woman to whom he had been attached loving any one else, and the thought that his dear Walewska was another's bride is said to have been one of the crowning sorrows of his captivity.

To this day the memory of the "great Emperor Napoleon" is venerated in Elba, where still survive one or two men whose fathers followed his eagles all over Europe. A French author has touchingly described his interview with one of these, the son of a Waterloo soldier, who, as a young cavalryman at Lodi, where the bullets rained in torrents and all fell dead or retired, had seen Bonaparte take the flag of the regiment and plant it

in the middle of the bridge, crying "The bullet that will kill me is not cast yet."

This veteran had transmitted to his son, a blind old man of immense age, an almost idolatrous admiration for the "man of the little cocked hat," about whom he was content to dream whilst waiting peacefully for death. This legendary fascination of the Emperor's name indeed caused him—though old, sightless, and infirm—to burst into tears as he reverently kissed a golden key and a crystal flask given by the King of Elba to his father. Giving his misty recollections of Imperial days, the blind old man became strangely transfigured.

"My father," said he, "told me I would have followed *him* to the ends of the earth, and all the others would have been with me, because he was the great Emperor."

His voice gathering strength, he continued—

"The Emperor is dead and my father is dead, and I am old in my turn, but if the Emperor were to come back I should go off with him like my father.

"Vive l'Empereur!"

Musing over the history of this stupendous man (who, as he himself said, conquered hearts as well as countries), and surveying his extraordinary career—from Fleurus to the Pyramids, from Arcola to

Austerlitz, from Wagram to Jena, and from Moscow to Waterloo—the nations he subjugated and the thrones he overthrew, even the most ardent admirer of Napoleon must deplore the immense amount of bloodshed, suffering, and misery which his conquering eagles left in their train, and plunged into a different line of thought, remember the peaceful visit paid in the days of his Consulate to Ermenonville.

Pausing before the tomb of Rousseau on the Île des Peupliers, the First Consul said, "It had been better for the repose of France if this man had never been."

"But," said one of his suite, "he prepared the Revolution of which, Citoyen Consul, you of all men have least reason to complain."

"Eh, bien!" answered Napoleon, "the future will show whether it would not have been better for the repose of the world if neither Rousseau nor I had never existed," and, plunged in reverie, the Man of Destiny strode on his way.

VIII

Instability of the Artistic Temperament—Opinion of Alphonse Daudet—Poets seldom Inspired by their Wives—Byron—His Opinion and Treatment of Women—His Relations with the Countess Guiccioli and Lady Caroline Lamb—Shelley—Burns—Sir Philip Francis and Madame Grand—Subsequent Adventures of this Lady, and her Marriage to Talleyrand—D'Orsay and Lady Blessington—Alexandre Dumas, Balzac and their Mistresses—Conjugal Fidelity of Serjent and Blake

ARTISTS, writers, and poets have always been prone to unfaithfulness, the greater number impassioned lovers but unsatisfactory husbands. Alphonse Daudet, indeed, declared that the man or the woman of strongly artistic temperament ought not to marry at any period. Nevertheless, Daudet's own married life was a refutation of such a theory. Curiously enough, though the vast majority of poets have written about women in an impassioned strain, in the greater number of instances little of their best work seems to have been directly inspired by any particular member of the fair sex, which, in real life, has received a good deal of bad treatment at the hands of writers of romantic verse. Most poets, as a matter of fact, have utilized woman rather as an

emotional symbol than anything else. Only a very few, like Spenser, Donne, and William Blake, have derived direct and valuable inspiration from their wives, whilst the most insistent moralists, such as Milton, Cowper and Wordsworth, have been the most spiritually polygamous. Wordsworth, indeed, complained that his wife's love, which had been a fountain, with time had become only a well.

Whether Byron, who wrote so ardently of love, was ever really a lover, in the highest sense of the word, seems exceedingly doubtful. The very fact that his highly-gifted brain could so vividly evoke the most passionate pictures, must have militated against his becoming a victim of the most acute forms of poignant emotion in this direction, for such a man must have divined a perfection which femininity can but rarely give. In addition to this his temperament was notoriously a very inconstant one, whilst his easy habits eventually rendered love a mere episode which soon palled, the object which had aroused his admiration falling in time to the level of previous conquests. Byron was without doubt a man of pleasure, which is quite a different thing from a lover. He loved women rather than any one woman, and never scrupled to express a rather low opinion of the sex in general.

He seems, indeed, to have regarded women as mere females of the human species, who, except for their personal beauty, were to be little distinguished from the females of any other animals. Like them, according to him, they inspired a blind and furious passion, and were easily abandoned by males in quest of prey or of revenge.

In his writings he entirely neglected to deal with the combats between duty and love, or the disinterested sacrifices of ardent friendship.

His heroines, almost without exception, are fond females clinging to a protector without discrimination, opinion, or even curiosity as to the character and qualities of the individual to whom they are attached. For the most part they are dominated by sexual passion, which all his delicate descriptions of their attractions scarcely conceals.

"I regard women," wrote Byron, "as very pretty, but inferior, creatures. I look on them as grown-up children; but, like a foolish mother, I am constantly the slave of one of them. Give a woman a looking-glass and burnt almonds, and she will be content."

Nevertheless, he was positively besieged by ladies, for whom he seems to have possessed a sort of hypnotic attraction.

In general appearance he is described as having

been but a mean figure, rather below than above the middle height, and his walk was always accompanied by a great clatter as if he wore peasants' shoes. His magnificent head and melodious voice won many hearts, but what most captivated womankind was the curious and dangerous "underlook" which flashed from his beautiful eyes. The expression of his fine countenance, proud and defiant as Lucifer, inspired a distrust, which was not lessened by that insidious softness which Southey compared to a "tiger patting something which had not angered it with its paw."

He was never a really happy man, for, like Chateaubriand, there lay deep in his character a hereditary melancholy, which, after having in infancy and early adolescence grown into hopes and dreams of happiness to come, was changed by experience of the world into a fixed mental despair. It was this state of mind which caused Byron in his poetry to raise the banner of revolution like a pirate flag. In reality he was anything but a democrat, and had nothing in common with radicals except a love of unlimited freedom of speech—especially for himself.

According to Goethe, Byron but dimly understood himself; ever living from hour to hour and passion to passion, he knew not and cared not what he did.

The like, however, added the great German thinker, would never come again.

Of all Byron's loves, the Countess Guiccioli alone, in all probability, exercised any lasting influence over his fickle affections.

He first met this lady at Venice when she was nineteen years of age, married to a man more than forty years older. A blonde, of rather insignificant stature, with dreamy eyes and an abundance of golden hair, the two soon fell in love.

Eventually, the Countess openly took up her abode with him, not to be separated until the poet sailed for Greece to aid the Greeks in their struggle for independence. This was in 1822, when Byron was in his thirty-fifth year.

A woman of strong character, she influenced her gifted lover as no other of her sex had ever done, and for a time even his literary work was swayed by her judgment. The Countess believed *Childe Harold* to have been the high-water mark of Byron's genius, and told the poet that its fame would outlive that of *Don Juan*, which he himself thought would survive long after *Childe Harold* was forgotten. In order to please his enchantress, whose words impressed him, the poet suspended the composition of the more lengthy poem, which, however, he eventually resumed. This, indeed, was one of

several indications that the domination of the Countess Guiccioli had begun to wane before Byron set out to join the Greek insurgents.

In her old age, Byron's enchantress made a marriage of convenience with the Marquis de Boissy, but the memory of the poet was ever in her heart, and him she defended with vivacity, publishing before her death, in 1873, memoirs, filled with interesting and affecting recollections.

Some time between the year 1866 and that of her death, she is said to have visited Newstead Abbey, Byron's old home.

The friendship of Byron with Lady Caroline Lamb aroused a storm of indignation, but, as a matter of fact, she was perhaps more to blame than the poet. Her husband, the Right Hon. William Lamb, afterwards Lord Melbourne, the first Prime Minister of Queen Victoria, was a genial, easy-going man of the world, who let his wife do pretty much as she chose. She, on the other hand, was highly sentimental, and always in search of some new excitement. Deeming herself a poet, she scribbled verses, which her friends politely admired, and read as little as they could. On her first meeting with Byron, she cried out: "That pale face is my fate!" She afterwards declared he was "Mad, bad, and dangerous to know!"

The poet in this case would appear to have been the wooed rather than the wooer, for Lady Caroline seems to have flung herself directly at his head. The romantic impetuosity of this woman, older than himself, of course ended by boring Byron, who declared that no one could have any idea of the horrible and absurd things she said and did.

On one occasion, after a quarrel, she made her way into his rooms disguised as a boy. At another time, when she thought herself slighted, she tried to stab herself with a pair of scissors. In a fit of temper she is supposed to have once tried to get some one to kill him.

Of all men Byron was the least suited for marriage, and as fortune willed it he found himself bound to a woman with whom he could never have agreed. For this reason his rupture with Lady Byron should have excited little surprise, never was there a more striking case of incompatibility of temperament.

The exact cause of the break has nevertheless been debated at enormous length, various theories and speculations, all of them based upon shadowy foundations, having been put forward.

But a few years ago Byron's grandson, the late Lord Lovelace, a man of high intellectual attainments, wrote a privately-issued volume of considerable interest, in which he contended that the

real cause of the separation was an incestuous love of the poet for his half-sister Augusta, married to Colonel George Leigh. Byron was certainly attached to this lady, but there is little evidence of any liaison. Another explanation of the poet's break with his wife—perhaps the true one—has never been put into print, for which, it may be added, it is quite unsuited.

Like his fellow-poet, Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, born in Sussex in 1792, was an extraordinary creature. His chief characteristics were a resolute repudiation of authority and scorn for convention. His code of morality he made for himself. Shy and sensitive even as a boy, Shelley was yet capable of becoming dangerously violent when confronted with what he deemed to be injustice. He was indeed, as Matthew Arnold said, "a beautiful and ineffectual angel beating his luminous wings against the void in vain."

In reality tall and slim, young Shelley stooped so much as to appear undersized. His head was beautiful, though very small, but this was counteracted to the eye by his long and tumbled hair which, when excited, he would rub and twist in a thousand different directions until it was actually bushy. His eyes and mouth were his best features. The former were of a deep violet-blue, and when Shelley felt

deeply moved, they seemed luminous with a wonderful and almost unearthly light. His mouth was finely chiselled, and might be regarded as representing perfection.

At Eton, owing to his independent views, he was known as "mad Shelley," or "Shelley the atheist." A very son of anarchy, contemptuous of authority, and rushing eagerly into anything which was forbidden, his career at University College, Oxford, was cut short after some five months, owing to a pamphlet called the *Necessity of Atheism*, the joint result of speculations in which he indulged with a fellow-undergraduate, Thomas Hogg, from Durham.

Shelley's first love affair was with his cousin Miss Harriet Grove, and he would in all probability have won her heart had he not boldly aired his atheistical opinions, which so frightened the young lady that she broke with him altogether.

His subsequent love affairs have been so often told that there is no need to dwell upon them here.

His relations with Harriett Westbrook, Mary Godwin, and others were unhappy, and Shelley's life, like that of so many others dowered with the artistic temperament, was one great mistake—a fevered existence of restless and unsatisfied longing,

haunted by vague desires which, from their shadowy nature, could never be assuaged.

Burns, the great lyric poet of Scotland, though of a totally different disposition from the poets just mentioned, was anything but regular in his affections; carrying on liaisons with Jean Armour and others. Once his heart was seriously touched, the death of Highland Mary—the young girl whom he loved in early life—undoubtedly produced a deep effect upon his disposition.

His betrothal to this beautiful young creature was highly romantic. By the side of a burn the romantic young people plighted their troth, choosing a Sabbath day to make their vows more sacred; and, in order to invest the occasion with more solemnity made their vows over an open Bible. This accomplished, taking water from the rippling stream as a symbol of the purity of their intentions, they scattered it in the air, after which they parted, never to meet again.

Highland Mary, during a visit to her relatives made in preparation for her marriage, was seized with a raging fever and died, and all her lover had to console him was the Bible she had exchanged with him and a lock of her beautiful hair.

The deep feeling of Burns for the memory of his

love is touchingly expressed in his poem, "Mary in Heaven"—

"Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care!
Time but th' impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?"

Taking leave of amorous poets and their sorrows, for their joys were few, and turning to writers in general, the attention is arrested by the escapade of Sir Philip Francis, the reputed author of the *Letters of Junius*. He was a great pamphleteer, who declared that he could scarcely remember a time when he did not write.

An ardent reformer—one of the founders of the Society of the Friends of the People and a strong opponent of the slave trade—Sir Philip was anything but a moralist in his own private life.

At the age of twenty-one he married an attractive young girl of no fortune, but the bonds of matrimony scarcely shackled him at all.

Going out to Bengal as Councillor with a large salary, he troubled himself little as to the wife he left behind him in England, and in 1778 was involved in a scandal which caused some stir. At Calcutta

he met a beautiful young woman who very soon made an impression upon his heart. This was a Mrs. Grand or Grant, who had been born in 1762 at Tranquebar, a small Danish possession in India. She was the daughter of a Chevalier de Worlée, an official of the French King in Pondicherry. Fifteen years later, when her father had become Captain of the Port at Chandernagor, Catherine Worlée, the prettiest girl in the place, fascinated a Mr. Grand (or Grant), an English clerk in the Indian Civil Service, who came of French Huguenot descent. The same year they were married, and Mrs. Grant soon began to attract attention at Calcutta Tall, slight, and fair, her beautiful blue eyes played havoc with the hearts of the English officials. Sir Philip, admired by women and feared by men, proceeded to pursue the young woman with his attentions, and, having turned her head by flattery, and given a ball, of which she was queen, a day or two later was able triumphantly to inscribe in his diary, "Amor vincit omnia.'

Being now on the best of terms with the fair young Frenchwoman, Sir Philip began to indulge in surreptitious nocturnal visits, one of which chronicled in the aforementioned diary runs: "8th December, 1778. At night the diable à quatre at the house of G. F. Grand, Esq."

That evening the writer, having by means of a bamboo ladder easily got into the Civil Servant's house, had considerable trouble before getting out again. Mrs. Grand was alone, and a most enjoyable tête-à-tête ensued, but when Sir Philip was leaving he was seized by some servants, who, perceiving the ladder, had been on the alert. One of these men at once went to fetch Mr. Grand, who, convinced, as he afterwards said, that he possessed the most beautiful and most virtuous of wives, when he heard the dreadful news lost his head, shed torrents of tears, and ran from friend to friend in order to borrow a sword to run the seducer through. At last he returned home, presumably determined to carry out his revengeful resolve, and in the place of Sir Philip found a stranger—Mr. Shee by name, who, in a towering rage, was carrying on a heated argument with the servants. It was then explained that Francis, having suddenly blown a whistle, a band of men had rushed in to his rescue, with the result that the culprit himself had escaped and Mr. Shee been caught in his place.

The next day Grand challenged the destroyer of his honour to a duel to the death, and received in return a flippant note from Sir Philip, saying that he was unaware what grievance Mr. Grand could have. Nevertheless, the latter was awarded 50,000

rupees as damages, with which sum he declared himself entirely satisfied.

Extraordinary as it may appear Sir Philip came very easily out of this scandal and actually managed to convince his wife that he was entirely innocent, having the audacity to pretend that his friendship for Mrs. Grand was entirely platonic. Lady Francis was so taken in by this story that she was always vaunting her husband's purity of conduct.

As for Mrs. Grand, she separated from her husband, and went back to her parents at Chandernagor, where she soon became extremely bored, for which reason it was with no great difficulty that Sir Philip persuaded her to live with him, which she did till 1780, when she sailed for Europe in a Dutch ship.

In 1782 she was living in Paris very well supplied with funds by several eminent financiers. One of her lovers bore the appropriate name of Plantamour; another, Louis Monneron, was deputy from India to the Constituent Assembly. She indulged in every sort of luxury, and once spent as much as £264 on a ball-dress—a colossal sum for those days! In 1783 her portrait was painted by Madame Vigée Lebrun; the picture in question, a most beautiful work of art, is now in the Doucet collection in Paris.

During the Revolution Madame Grand went to England, but she was not well received, for which reason she returned to Paris directly the frenzy of the Revolutionists had begun to calm, and then it was that her future became assured owing to a meeting with Talleyrand.

Her first connection with this celebrated man arose about 1792, when he was Minister for Foreign Affairs. She had been accused of being in correspondence with Royalist *émigrés*, and, perceiving her innocence of such a charge, and her beauty, the ex-Prince-Bishop offered her protection, which she accepted. At that time she was one of the most beautiful women in Europe, her dazzling complexion, bright blue eyes, *retroussé* nose, and fair hair of a remarkable shade, together with a figure of extreme elegance, were rendered doubly attractive by her suppleness and indolent grace: indeed, it is no wonder that Talleyrand, always a great admirer of the fair sex, should have fallen a willing victim to her charms. His liaison with Madame Grand, however, even in those very free days, did not escape censure. He was denounced as an unfrocked priest, who, not content with French women of easy virtue, must needs seek them amongst those imported by the English from India. He was declared to be engaged in a pretended love intrigue,

in which Madame Grand was an intermediary of the enemies of the Revolution.

Circulars appeared in the newspapers, one of which represented Talleyrand wearing the portrait of the beautiful foreigner in place of his Episcopal cross. The *Républicain* announced that, tired of gallant celibacy, the astute diplomatist had sown his wild oats, and made the lady his wife. This, however, was not the case. Under the Directory, moral scandals mattered little; nevertheless Madame Grand, who evidently had some hope of capturing the wily ex-ecclesiastic in the meshes of matrimony, profited by its easy law to obtain a divorce from her husband, after which she and Talleyrand made no secret whatever about their intimacy.

When Bonaparte triumphed, she presided at the splendid entertainments given at the Hôtel Gallifet, and under the Consulate she became the rival of women like Madame Récamier and Madame de Staël. Unlike the latter, however, she was very unintellectual, even stupid, said some. One of these, in conversation with Talleyrand, bluntly expressed his surprise that a man of such high mental attainments should be satisfied with a woman of such limited ideas as Madame Grand. "Elle me repose," was the calm reply of Talleyrand, who, like many other great men, looked for something else than

cleverness in women. His experiences with Madame de Staël had not prejudiced his mind in favour of blue-stockings: as he used to say, one must have loved a woman of genius to appreciate the happiness of loving a fool.

In 1802, the illicit union of Talleyrand provoked the attention of Bonaparte, who, having pacified France, was restoring social order. Some amusement had been caused by a report that at one of Madame Grand's suppers all her old lovers had been present. Sir Philip Francis, who was mentioned, does not seem to have cared, but Mr. Grand was much annoyed. Such rumours made the First Consul determined to take action. He wished his Court to maintain at least outward propriety, and at first thought of making Talleyrand give up his love, returning him to the Church and having him made a Cardinal; but the wily diplomatist had no idea of agreeing with such a plan, and so, as Bonaparte could not make him a Cardinal, he determined at least to make him a husband. Another reason for this was that Madame Grand, hearing that the First Consul was going to have her separated from her lover, got Josephine, with whom she was on excellent terms, to plead her cause with Bonaparte, to whom she was eventually presented at the Malmaison. Moved by her beauty, the First Consul said: "Well,

Talleyrand shall marry you, and that will settle everything; but you must either bear his name or leave the house." He afterwards repeated this decision to Talleyrand himself, giving him twenty-four hours in which to decide.

Talleyrand did marry his enchantress, but, owing to the vows he had taken in his youth, notwithstanding prolonged and earnest efforts never succeeded in getting the Pope to recognize the marriage. The negotiations and arguments employed by the wily diplomatist and their complete failure are matters of history.

Another fashionable and gifted figure in the annals of gallantry is Count d'Orsay, called by Byron "Cupidon." His father had been known as "Le Beau d'Orsay," and both were extraordinarily handsome men. Whilst a dandy, and at one time a social arbiter of considerable power, d'Orsay was also possessed of no little artistic talent.

During the latter days of his residence in London over head and ears in debt, he was eventually only able to appear to the outside world at the Opera on Saturday evenings, just as it emptied at midnight, after the Queen's writ had ceased to run. He then began to utilize his faculty for drawing portraits (without exception in profile), and made quite a

considerable sum in this manner. The well-known likenesses of his acquaintances were drawn for Mitchell, the proprietor of the Theatrical Box Office, and the lithographic copies were sold by him at five shillings apiece.

D'Orsay's descent was somewhat curious. In the eighth volume of the *Memoirs* of Casanova (in which is to be found an enormous mass of detail highly interesting from an historical point of view) is an account of the Court of the Duke of Württemberg, which at that time was one of the most brilliant in Europe. This Duke was a most dissipated man, and never without a number of mistresses; one of these, who seems also to have been on good terms with Casanova, eventually married a Frenchman, whose son, a Napoleonic general, became the father of Count d'Orsay.

The future king of dandies, as a young man, was given a commission in the French army by Louis XVIII, and joined his regiment at Valence, to which city, in 1822, came one day Lord and Lady Blessington—the latter a lovely and fascinating Irishwoman, who, as a girl, had been bullied into marrying a mad officer, Captain Farmer, who made her life so miserable that she eventually left him. This Captain was eventually cashiered for an attack upon his Colonel, and met his death in

1817 by falling from a window in the King's Bench Prison after a drunken orgy.

At twenty-eight years of age Mrs. Farmer, as has been said a woman of great beauty, became Countess of Blessington—her new husband, who had been infatuated with her for years, was in an altogether different way almost as eccentric as her old one. Wilful and extravagant, he loved display, and was a conspicuous figure in theatrical circles having previously been married to an actress, Mrs. Mary Brown. As an example of this nobleman's extravagant ideas it may be mentioned that he spent no less than three thousand pounds on the funeral of his first wife, for which he brought from France the black velvet catafalque which had figured in the public obsequies of a great Napoleonic soldier—Marshal Duroc.

At Valence both Lady Blessington and her husband seem to have been instantly attracted by the charm of d'Orsay's personality. He was then a fine figure of a man, six feet high, broad-chested, with hazel eyes and chestnut hair. Before long he was on the best of terms with Lord Blessington, who, no doubt prompted by his wife, proposed that the handsome and agreeable French officer should marry his eldest legitimate daughter, of his first marriage, offering to settle £40,000. Lady Harriet Gardiner,

a girl of about fifteen, possessed few personal attractions, and d'Orsay's heart being already captured by her step-mother, the match took some time to conclude. Eventually, no doubt in order to dispel the scandalous rumours which began to be rife, d'Orsay did marry the girl, who was left a great deal to herself; the whole family then returned to London and lived together in Seymour Place.

This marriage, it has been assumed, was a mere business arrangement which the mother of the bride (Lady Blessington) stipulated should not develop into anything more romantic. Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that d'Orsay and her daughter became husband and wife in fact as well as name.

For a month the former allowed the girl he had married to be nothing to him at all. At the end of that time, however, when she had one day been out riding, she came into his room looking so attractive that for a short time the two (much to the disgust of Lady Blessington) lived on intimate terms.

The charms of the poor young Countess, however, soon lost their power, and when, two years later, Lord Blessington died, his son-in-law at once separated from the unfortunate bride, eventually going to live at No. 4, Kensington Gore, next door to Lady Blessington at Gore House, where she

reigned for thirteen years. The irregular union, curiously enough, appears to have been recognized as a natural thing by everybody, and Count d'Orsay was now accepted as an oracle of fashion. For a long time the extravagantly furnished mansion in Kensington was frequented by all the men of the day famous in art and literature, as well as by the leading wits. Louis Napoleon (who, like his host Count d'Orsay, is said to have longed in vain for admittance to White's) dined at Lady Blessington's two or three times a week during his residence in England. The circumstances of the Gore House *ménage* prevented many ladies being visitors there. A few, however, went, amongst whom it is said was the lady who became the wife of Benjamin Disraeli.

The only thing lacking to complete the happiness of the lovers was now want of money, a need which before very long began to make itself felt; then it was that in order to make both ends meet d'Orsay drew and sold portraits, while Lady Blessington wrote novels describing fashionable life, in the composition of which she is supposed to have received considerable assistance. Though her good looks were departing, Gore House was thronged with persons likely to be of use to her in a literary way—

"For beauty once but now for dinners prized,
And novels by another hand revised;
Bards and sub-editors infest her rout,
With peers renowned for nothing but the gout."

D'Orsay painted a great number of portraits, amongst them the last portrait of the Duke of Wellington. The latter was very pleased with it, and said, "At last I have been painted like a gentleman. I'll never sit to any one else."

Besides being an artist the Count possessed some talent as a sculptor, and executed several busts. As for Lady Blessington, she used her pen to such good purpose that for nearly twenty years she earned annually a sum varying between £2,000 and £3,000. Her books are now, however, entirely forgotten, but at one time her *Memoirs of a Femme de Chambre* and *Lionel Deerhurst; or, Fashionable Life under the Regency* enjoyed a great vogue.

Besides writing books, she also contributed to various periodicals; when the *Daily News* was started in 1846, she received an annual stipend of £500 for supplying exclusive information. For many years she edited the "Keepsakes" and "Books of Beauty," so popular with a former generation, and altogether she must have been a most indefatigable worker. Though her literary talents do not appear to have been of a very high order, she enjoyed the friend-

ship of several great writers, amongst them Byron, who wrote one of his last minor poems to her.

The final crash came in the spring of 1849. Lady Blessington was then sixty, d'Orsay fifty-one. For years the lady had been wildly extravagant, and one firm alone put in a claim for £4,000 spent upon useless frippery of every description.

At the sale, prices of a ridiculously small kind were the order of the day, valuable pictures, china, and furniture being knocked down at truly farcical figures. The whole contents of the house fetched less than £12,000. Poor Count d'Orsay now realized that his star in the firmament of social celebrity had set, and, threatened with arrest owing to a bootmaker's debt of £500, quickly betook himself to Paris, whither Lady Blessington was not long in following him. In that city she died at the end of the same year, being buried in a mausoleum at Chaloumey, near St.-Germain-en-Laye. In this monument to his mistress's memory erected by d'Orsay he, too, was laid to rest.

For five years the Count lived in Paris much crippled by debt and leading a wretched existence, which, however, Napoleon III did something to alleviate, for in 1852, shortly after he had become Emperor, he appointed the poor broken man of fashion Director of Fine Arts, a post to which a

substantial income was attached. It was too late, however; for when the news was brought to him the prince of dandies was already a dying man.

The story of the loves of d'Orsay and Lady Blessington can scarcely be called edifying, but there is no doubt that at one time the two were passionately in love with one another. The worst feature was d'Orsay's marriage to his mistress's daughter; but it must be remembered that such things were looked upon with great leniency at that day, and, owing to various causes, it was extremely difficult for the Frenchman to avoid a marriage, which seemed the only way that he could continue to see the object of his adoration. In other respects d'Orsay on many occasions displayed very fine qualities, and to women in general he was ever considerate.

D'Orsay, of course, had the outlook of a Frenchman in matters of love, besides which he was a man of very strong passions, though far less brutal and more restrained than those of other of his clever countrymen.

An example of one of these who possessed atavistic traits which assimilated him to the primitive male was Alexandre Dumas, who was always filling his house with mistresses, whom, however, he invariably treated like spoiled children, whilst

taking care that they should have no part in his intellectual life. As long as they were pleasant he tolerated them, submitting in patience to be plundered. When, however, they became too exacting he would fly into a volcanic passion, and turn them out of his house at a moment's notice.

Balzac, by his own confession, as a youth never fell in love; the only woman for whom he seemed to have ever cherished a real affection was Madame Hanska, a Polish Countess, who, struck with admiration for his literary genius, began to write to him in 1832. On their first meeting, a year later, the great novelist expressed himself as being intoxicated with love for this beautiful brunette of twenty-seven. She was rich, and when he married her some eighteen years later he looked forward to a life of ease and happiness. He declared, indeed, that, having had no flowery spring, he was looking forward to the most brilliant of summers, the mildest of autumns, and was consequently almost crazy with delight.

The marriage, however, proved a disappointment and snapped the chain of sympathy which had united the couple when they had been merely lovers. Jarring revelations produced much friction. Balzac discovered that his wife was not nearly so

rich as he had imagined, whilst she was appalled at the extent of his hitherto unrevealed debts. When he died, not very long after, the lady, however, most honourably undertook to settle his heavy liabilities.

One of the theories which Balzac was wont to enunciate amongst his intimates, was that in order to obtain the fullest development of their talent, literary men should live in the most absolute chastity. Numbers of men of genius, according to him, would have done much more but for their weakness in connection with women—love-letters he allowed as tending to form a writer's style.

Like many moralists, however, Balzac, whilst inculcating chastity in others, was very far from practising it himself, and in the course of his life he had a number of mistresses, certain of whom bore him four children.

As a matter of fact, feminine society was very necessary to him, and the prodigious amount of work which he accomplished was largely assisted by the encouragement and help of the various fair ones who believed themselves to monopolize the great writer's affections.

Though the French artists and engravers of the eighteenth century were for the most part not men of very rigorous morality, several of them adored

[*To face p.* 274.

MADAME DE ST. AUBIN.
(*By and after her husband.*)

their wives, whose features by the exercise of their incomparable art they bequeathed to posterity.

Debucourt, for instance, has left us the portrait of his second wife, whom he married when about fifty. In her hand is a letter on which is written "Mon amie, . . . pour la vie, ton ami Debucourt, an VII."

Two of the most beautiful French engravings are "Comptez sur mes serments" and "Au moins soyez discret," romantic and delicate representations of the engraver Augustin de St. Aubin and his wife—these were executed as offerings of love. Madame de St. Aubin was also her husband's model for another graceful engraving of great beauty known as "La Baronne." Beneath this he inscribed—

"L'Amour en la voyant crut voir sa mère un jour
Et tout ce qui la voit a les yeux de l'amour."

Though, as has been said, the artistic temperament is generally fickle in matters concerning the heart, one of the most striking examples of constancy on record is the French engraver Sergent, who, as an ardent Jacobin, voted for the death of the King whose portrait he had engraved.

In his youth at Chartres, Sergent fell in love with a young girl, Marie Marceau Desgraviers, and her image was ever in his imagination when he had betaken himself to Paris. Returning to his native

city after three years, he found his adored one had become the wife of another, Mlle. Marceau having been married to M. de Champion de Cernel, who appears afterwards to have treated her with a good deal of brutality. Seventeen years later, on the death of this husband, whose misconduct had caused Madame Cernel to seek refuge in a convent, Sergent at last realized the dream of his life, and married the woman whom he adored, remaining her ardent lover to his dying day at the age of ninety-three.

His wife's death at eighty left him entirely disconsolate, and he then published a pamphlet entirely devoted to a detailed description of her mental and physical charms.

As the old engraver saw his end drawing nigh, he became reconciled to the Catholic Church, the doctrines of which he had so energetically combated during the Revolution, and in his last moments asked for the consolations which Roman Catholicism offers, the reason he gave being that he was unwilling to run any risk of finding himself in another world separated from the woman whom he had adored on earth.

Madame Sergent, it should be added, was the sister of the gallant General Marceau.

Another striking instance of undeviating devotion and love was that strange dreamer, artist and poet,

William Blake, in whom were united inexhaustible patience with a fiery and creative imagination.

When twenty-five years old, Blake wedded a girl of very humble origin, Catherine Boucher, a bright-eyed brunette, loving, loyal, with a frank and accessible heart. Like the majority of her class in those days, she had received no education, and could only make her mark in the church register. Catherine, however, was endowed with an adaptive, open mind capable of speedy improvement; and, profiting by her husband's tuition, soon acquired the arts of reading and writing, together with considerable skill in working off his engravings, whilst also imbibing much of his original and imaginative spirit.

The lovers were married in 1782 in the newly rebuilt church of Battersea, then a village which was just beginning to shake hands with Chelsea by a timber bridge over the Thames—bright and clear at that time, with many a placid angler dotting its banks. Green meadows and golden cornfields lay between the quaint High Street and the purple heights of Wimbledon and Richmond; and many a pleasant ramble did the poet and his sweetheart take in rural spots now long covered with bricks and mortar. Blake always cherished an affection for Battersea itself, where he won his love, and wrote—

"But that sweet village, where my black-ey'd maid
Closes her eyes in sleep beneath Night's shade,
Whene'er I enter, more than mortal fire
Burns in my soul and does my life inspire."

For forty-five years the couple—sometimes in dire poverty—lived in the greatest happiness, during which time Mrs. Blake never failed to be the best wife that any man of genius (or for the matter of that any man) ever had.

Nevertheless, though Blake adored his faithful companion amidst poverty and neglect, and lived with her in seldom disturbed accord, his strange and original nature made him stern enough at times.

When, for instance, Mrs. Blake contradicted her brother-in-law, Robert, who lived with the young couple in the early portion of their married life, her husband took her severely to task for using what he considered to be unwarrantable language. Breaking into the discussion with characteristic impetuosity, he bade his wife kneel down and beg Robert's pardon, or she should never see his face again. This was said in a manner which showed that his words were really meant. Poor Mrs. Blake, though, as she afterwards said, she thought it was very hard to beg her brother-in-law's pardon when she was not in fault, did kneel down and

meekly murmur, "Robert, I beg your pardon—I am in the wrong." To which he abruptly retorted, "Young woman, you lie—I am in the wrong."

Though the Blakes were never affluent, and at times lived on as little as ten shillings a week, there was never misery in their simple home, about which clung an air of natural dignity. Blake indeed was rich in poverty, for, besides a dearly loved helpmeet, he had his visions and peace. Perhaps amongst intellectual men he was the happiest of all, ever imbued with calm, serene and elevated joy.

Being once asked with other artists to a party, a beautiful little girl, the child of rich parents, was presented to the artist-poet, then an old man, poorly but, as was his invariable way, neatly dressed. The author of the *Songs of Innocence* looked at her kindly for some time without speaking, and then, gently stroking her long ringlets, said, "May God make this world to you, my child, as beautiful as it has been to me." The vain little darling of Fortune, nursed in all the elegancies and luxuries of wealth, was much puzzled at such a speech from a poor shabby old man, but in after years she understood and treasured the remembrance of words spoken by one who on earth had caught a gleam of heaven.

One of Mrs. Blake's greatest troubles was the

inability of her husband to understand the necessity of money, and as he was apt to resent the mention of its absence she would set before him at dinner just what there was in the house, whilst tactfully making no comment. This invariably answered the purpose of making Blake attend to the business arrangements which brought him in so little.

Owing to tact and forbearance, he and his beloved Kate lived in uninterrupted harmony. He was not only her husband but also her lover and her child. In his visions (some of which are preserved in designs now worth a great price) she implicitly believed; and when he told his friends that some hero of antiquity had given him a sitting, would confirm the fact in awe-struck tones. She, too, learned to have visions, and would tell of shadowy processions wending their way on the surface of the river in broad daylight. Being in such entire sympathy with her husband, she was able to colour his designs with considerable success. In appearance the couple, it is said, greatly resembled the calm patriarchal figures of Job and his wife as delineated by Blake himself.

The power of his imagination is, perhaps, nowhere better shown than by his description to a number of children of what he had seen during a country walk. "I came to a meadow," said he, "at

the farthest corner of which I saw a fold of lambs. Coming nearer, the ground blushed with flowers, and the wattled cote, and its woolly tenants were of an exquisite pastoral beauty ; but I looked again, and it proved to be no living flock but beautiful sculpture." A lady, thinking such a pretty sight would be amusing for the children to see, eagerly inquired where it was the old artist had seen it. "Here, madam," replied Blake touching his forehead.

This is not the place to speak of the work of one whose extraordinary imagination and inventive genius have sometimes earned for him the not altogether inappropriate title of a "glorious madman." Appreciated by few during his hard-working, poverty-stricken and stainless life, within the last twenty years William Blake has come into his own.

Posterity indeed has accorded him that high appreciation which but a few contemporaries realized was his due.

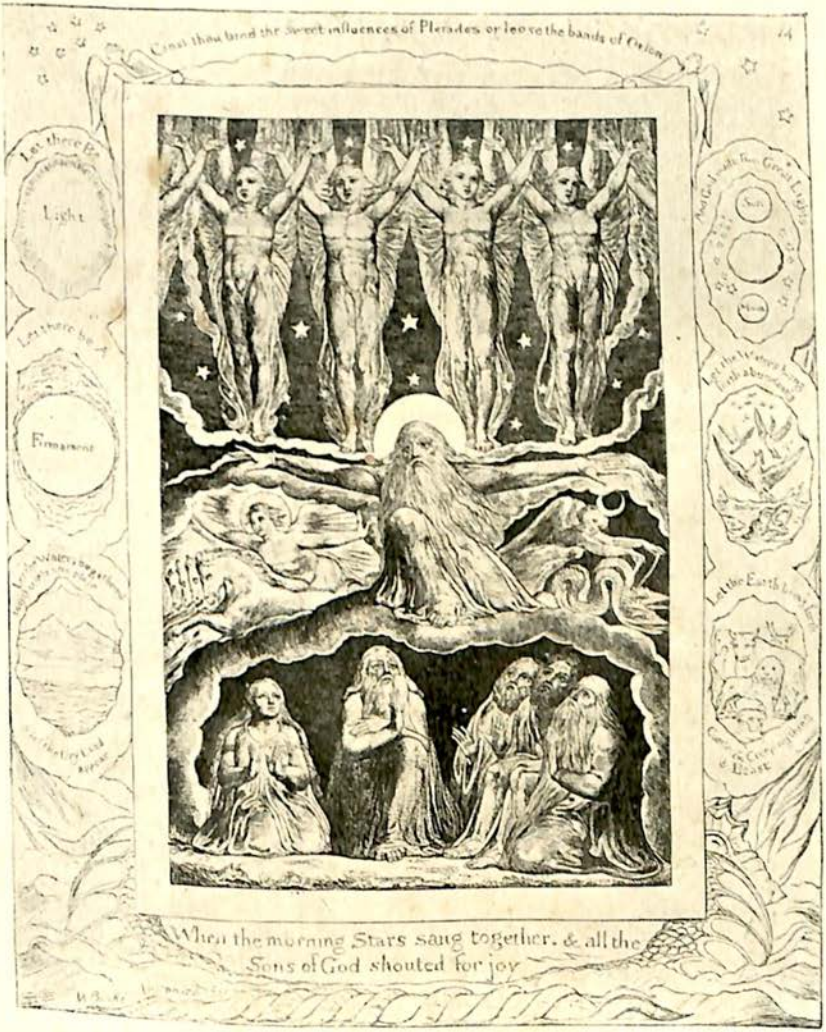
His death was the death of a true saint—his last glance being for his beloved Kate, who, though no longer attractive, young or beautiful, remained in his eyes the same as when, forty-five years before, they had wandered together amongst the sweet Surrey lanes. Ever ready, ever helpful, she sat beside him in their little room looking out over the river, not far from the roaring Strand. As the

old artist's strength was ebbing away his eyes rested on her once graceful form, his thoughts flying to all she had been to him during their life of hourly companionship. "Keep as you are," cried he, "you have ever been an angel to me, and I will draw you." And with a hand not weakened by the approach of death, he struck off what has been described as a frenzied sketch—not like, but highly interesting.

On the day of his death he composed and uttered songs to his Maker, which he affectionately told his wife were inspired. "Beloved," said he, "we shall never be parted, for I shall always be about you, near to take care of you." To her tearful inquiry as to where he wished to be buried, he answered that, as far as his own feelings were concerned, she might bury him where she liked, but as father, mother, aunt and brother were buried in Bunhill Row, perhaps it would be better to lie there; as to service, he should wish for that of the Church of England.

Chanting songs of serene joy he passed away. A humble neighbour, who was Mrs. Blake's only companion as the poet-artist ceased to breathe, afterwards said, "I have been at the death not of a man, but of an angel."

In his last moments his eyes brightened, and it


Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion
14
Let there be Light
Let there be a Firmament
When the morning Stars sang together. & all the Sons of God shouted for joy

[*To face p.* 282.

"THE MORNING STARS.

(*Plate* 14 *from* "*Illustrations of the Book of Job, invented and engraved by William Blake.*"

seemed as if he saw the realization of some of his splendid designs, one of which has rightly been declared "never to have been surpassed in the whole range of Christian art."

God is speaking of His omnipotence and right of judgment on that day of Creation "when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy."

Blake himself is said to have expressed a wish that this glorious composition might be carried out in the west window of Westminster Abbey—this very likely would be impossible, nevertheless it is to be hoped that his genius may some day be commemorated by a memorial in stained glass realizing his idea.

IX

The Loves of two Great Frenchmen—Victor Hugo and Léon Gambetta—The one Fickle, the other True—Extraordinary Relations of Hugo with Juliette Drouet—Noble Self-Abnegation of his wife—Polygamous Tendencies of the Poet—First Meeting of Gambetta with Léonie Léon—The Dawn of Love—The Park of Versailles—Léonie becomes his Mistress—*Hors cet annel point n'est d'Amour*—Accident to the Great Tribune—His Illness and Death

No two Frenchmen in all probability were ever so different from one another as Gambetta and Victor Hugo, the poet, who, according to François Coppée, during the siege of Paris actually wanted to address a challenge to the King of Prussia.

"We are both old," he said. "He is a powerful sovereign, and it is agreed that I am a great poet. We are therefore equal. Why should we not decide the quarrel which divides our two nations by single combat and spare so many lives?"

The creator of Quasimodo and Esmeralda, who tempered his genius with a vast egotism, was full of romantic dreams and fine ideas ill-adapted for ordinary humanity: though he wrote of the simple joys of domestic life, he was very far from carrying the higher forms of such felicity into his own scheme of life, in which, had inclination

prompted him, he would have out-paramoured the Turk.

The cavil of the moralist had no effect upon him at all, and in utter disregard of creeds and conventions he enlivened a life of tremendous industry by interludes of facile love.

Gambetta, the man of action, was of an entirely different disposition, and though imbued with most of the attributes of a fiery Southern nature, was in reality far more moral than Hugo.

To his eye there was but one beloved face on earth—but one river to the ocean of his thoughts—his beloved, to whom he remained faithful unto death.

* * * * * *

Victor Hugo, though in many ways a man of exalted character, resembled the majority of other great poets in his utter disregard of conventionalities. The history of the liaison of his life is extraordinary in many respects.

When scarcely twenty years old, in 1822, he married the pretty, dark-eyed Adèle Foucher. The young couple were at first very poor; Adèle had no dowry and her husband little beside a gift for writing fine verses—these, however, before long began to have a marketable value, and, as Louis XVIII granted him a small pension, their future was soon assured.

Eleven years after this marriage, an actress of about twenty-seven years old called upon Hugo in his house in the Place Royale (now the Place des Vosges), Paris. Her name was Juliette Drouet, and she sought a part in the poet's play *Lucretia Borgia.* Hugo gave her a small part, which her beauty and personal magnetism caused to stand out.

Juliette Drouet had had several lovers, the first a Parisian sculptor, M. Pradier, for whose statue of Strasburg, which stands in the Place de la Concorde, she sat as model. By Pradier Mlle. Drouet, as she called herself (her real name was Gauvin), had a little girl, and, with this child to support, some two years later she found herself adrift, and so went upon the stage, where she achieved some success in the creation of minor parts and attracted the attention of a number of admirers, the principal of whom were Alphonse Karr and a wealthy Russian.

Within a few days of their first meeting, Victor Hugo, then thirty-one, was at the feet of the beautiful woman, and a fortnight later had become her lover. Concerning this he wrote—

"Never forget, my angel, that mysterious hour which has changed thy life. That day thou didst leave outside far from thee the tumult, the din, the false happiness, to enter mystery, solitude and love."

Nevertheless, Juliette Drouet continued to remain on intimate terms with the rich Russian noble, which so enraged Victor Hugo that he determined to give her up.

In reality the poor woman found herself in a dilemma which the romantic poet had not troubled to foresee.

Her moral rehabilitation, which, as conceived by Hugo, consisted in abandoning all other lovers to become his alone, entailed what amounted for her to financial ruin, for he was then a poor man.

Hugo apparently did not at first take this into account, and for three days broke off all communication with her. At the end of that time, however, unable to keep away from her side, he went to see her and gave vent to a flood of passionate words.

Deeply moved by the poet's emotion, and quite carried away by his eloquence, she now resolved to abandon everything for him, with the result that a few days later her furniture was seized for debt and she was obliged to leave Paris. Hugo, in terrible distress, realized what had happened when he learnt from a friend that Juliette had gone away to Brest, and determined to extricate the woman he loved from her trouble. With the help of a few friends, amongst whom was the sculptor Pradier, the former lover of Juliette, he got together a few thousand

francs with which to appease his mistress's irate creditors.

He then installed her in a very modest *appartement* quite close to his own house in the Rue Saint Anastase.

She now became his inspiring force, remaining so for over fifty years. What Beatrice was to Dante, Juliette Drouet was to Victor Hugo. The anniversary of the day on which the actress had really responded to his love was solemnly kept by the poet during all these years by writing a page in a little book called by her the "Livre de l'Anniversaire," which was always kept under her pillow.

Considering her antecedents, the constancy and devotion which Juliette Drouet displayed is somewhat remarkable, for Victor Hugo, though a great genius, was possessed of an overwhelming egotism which must have been trying to those who were perpetually in contact with him.

He treated his MSS. as if conspirators were lurking to seize them, and, when he had some of them bound at Guernsey, insisted on the binder returning them to him every day at nightfall, in order that they might be locked up in a fireproof safe.

He would seldom admit he was wrong about anything. Throughout *Les Travailleurs de la Mer* he calls a bagpipe a "bugpipe." Some Scotchmen

remonstrated with him about this, pointing out the error, but the poet would make no change: "When I, Victor Hugo, poet and dramatist, write anything, it becomes right, because I write it," said he. "It is 'bugpipe' because I say so."

For thirty-five years, it should be added, Madame Hugo was alive and aware that her husband's mistress lived close by. She carried toleration so far as to visit her, and through a long term of years allowed her sons and daughters to do the same—such a concession to the waywardness of genius is probably unique. Madame Hugo seemed, indeed, to ignore her husband's irregular connection; it is just possible that she may have believed his friendship for the actress to be platonic, but in any case she magnanimously refused to resent it, exhibiting a complaisance little less than sublime.

The plain truth is that Victor Hugo was by nature hopelessly inconstant—not only to his wife—but to his mistress. An irrepressible tendency towards amorous adventure more than once involved him in unpleasant predicaments. On one occasion, indeed, the poet nearly became dragged into a grave public scandal owing to an intrigue with a married woman.

Writing to his sister in July 1845, Chopin speaks of this unpleasant affair.

"Albert only tells me what the newspapers had related without giving names of the adventure that happened a few days ago to Victor Hugo.

"M. Billard, a not very celebrated historical painter, very ugly, had a pretty wife—M. Billard surprised them—Victor Hugo was compelled to show the person who wanted to arrest him his medal of a French peer so that he might be left temporarily in peace—Hugo has gone away to travel for a few months. Madame Hugo (very magnanimously) has taken Madame Billard under her protection; and Juliette, that famous actress of the Porte St. Martin—famous about ten years ago—who has been under Hugo's protection for a long time in spite of Madame Hugo, his children, and his poetry as to family morality—this Juliette, I repeat, has gone away with him."

This was not the only occasion on which Madame Hugo by the exercise of extraordinary self-abnegation smoothed matters over for her gifted but erratic husband.

Juliette Drouet, on the other hand, was jealous and exacting concerning the poet's love. In a letter written in 1851, when she had reason to doubt his constancy, she denounced any infidelity on his part as sacrilege rather than treason.

The lady who occasioned this outburst was a

certain Claire, who had a rendezvous with Hugo at the door of the Assembly, where, as luck would have it, Juliette Drouet chanced to espy the poet, who, embarrassed and confused, escaped into the building.

This would seem to have been only one of several occasions on which the jealousy of the actress was aroused, for, like most men of enormous cerebral vitality, Victor Hugo could not be securely shackled by any regular or irregular code. Nevertheless, he adored the mistress who, by her infinite charm, had enmeshed his heart. Her hold over him, indeed, was founded upon more stable foundations than mere ephemeral passion, which her furious jealousy probably rather augmented.

At Guernsey Victor Hugo led an extraordinary existence, publicly maintaining two homes, Hauteville House, where he spent the morning with his wife, and "The Friends," a small villa close by, where he frequently dined with Juliette Drouet, who also entertained his sons and many of his visitors.

Admirers of the poet who had come to see him at Guernsey generally made a point of going to visit Madame Drouet before they left the island.

After 1834, to her death, in 1883, she continued to be the regnant goddess of her lover's muse, prompting him to the expression of every shade of

romantic feeling. Living close to his house, during all these years she wrote numberless letters, often three times daily. She was his constant companion in the rambles which he loved to make about Paris, was with him when he worked, and assisted him in his escape from Paris, following him to his exile in Guernsey. She was indeed not only a mistress, but a faithful friend and companion.

Juliette Drouet predeceased the great chieftain of the Romantic school by two or three years. During her lifetime he had provided for her in a sufficient though never lavish way, his most valuable gift having been the small house, "The Friends," at Guernsey. It is, therefore, obvious that Juliette Drouet did not remain faithful to Hugo throughout such a span of years from any sordid reasons—she truly loved the great poet with whom for fifty years her life had been linked.

* * * * *

The Southern type of Frenchman, except to those who have mastered the contradictions of his nature, is prone to many extravagances, conveying the impression that he is incapable of serious thought.

This, however, is not the case. Though undoubtedly liable (to use the phrase Lord Beaconsfield once applied to Mr. Gladstone) "to become intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity,"

the Southern Frenchman, in spite of his boisterous oratory, possesses great qualities.

Daudet, who knew his countrymen well, said: "The sun, transformed into heat and movement, furious and irresistible, glides into the veins of the *méridionaux*. Though it may intoxicate them and turn their heads, it never affects their intelligence; but, on the contrary, it makes it stronger, deeper, and more lucid."

Never was this better exemplified than in Léon Gambetta, the organizer of the National Defence, who, when France lay stricken and apparently helpless before the German invader, kept the spirit of his nation alive.

The true type of the man of the Midi, he was by nature impulsive, ardent, hot-tempered, voluble and fiery. He was also a man of powerful emotions, which, however, never affected his marvellous energy.

Born at Cahors, he was French only on his mother's side, his father having been of Italian birth. Like so many young Frenchmen of his rank in life, he determined to become a barrister, and lived as a student in the Quartier Latin, where his audacity and unrestrained freedom of speech soon procured him a certain notoriety as an ardent Republican.

In the last days of the Second Empire, Napoleon III, worn out by care, and already a sick man, somewhat relaxed his efforts to check denunciations of the régime he had maintained since the *coup d'état*. The attacks upon his rule gained in bitterness and force, whilst many scurrilous sheets poisoned the minds of the French people, and weakened the supports of an already tottering throne. Wild-eyed orators began to harangue the people in terms which would once have led to their imprisonment, and the Republican opposition did all in its power to hamper and defeat the policy of a Government which it despised and loathed. This was Gambetta's opportunity. His fiery oratory filled the resorts which it was his custom to frequent, and he soon became the idol of that fickle Paris which has ever been ready to call for change.

At this period was it that he first saw the woman who, until the day of his death, was to be the sharer of all his secrets, the adored being who kept him from marrying—the guiding star and inspiration of his life.

In 1869, Gambetta was elected as a Red Republican to the Corps Législatif, where, from the very first, his vehemence and fire gained him ready hearing and applause.

Ladies are admitted to hear debates in the French

Chamber, and there, one day, Gambetta observed in the gallery a tall, graceful woman, quietly dressed, and wearing long black gloves, which accentuated the beauty of her hands and arms. None of the deputies paid such close attention to the orator as did this woman, whom he had never seen before, and who appeared to be entirely alone.

At every sitting the fair one was in her place, and soon Gambetta learnt to look for her, till, at last, whenever he came to a peculiarly fervid burst of oratory, he turned to see her face lighted up by an enthusiasm born of his words.

In the early part of 1870, Gambetta surpassed himself in eloquence, and the Ministry he denounced became dismayed at the effect created by his impassioned denunciation, to which the mysterious lady continued to be a constant and highly appreciative listener. After his flights of fiery eloquence, Gambetta's eyes soon began to turn towards the gallery where he looked for a glance of approval from the sphinx-like eyes, which, always fixed upon him, seemed to inquire whether his soul was able to love?

At last came a day when he could no longer contain himself; and, having written a note, he bade one of the officials carry it to the black-gloved lady whom he pointed out.

Watching to observe how his missive should be received, he saw her take it, read it, quietly tear it up and then disappear.

Two years later, after the war with Germany was ended, Gambetta's name had become known as the very incarnation of patriotism. His untiring efforts had revived the spirit of his countrymen, crushed under an invader's heel, whilst he had done everything possible to prevent the cession of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany, and saved his country's honour by his organization of national defence, never ceasing to pursue the self-imposed task of once more placing his beloved France in the forefront of the nations.

The terrible events which had placed him in a position of commanding power had left him little time to think of women, but he still remembered the beautiful unknown whose secret he had been unable to solve.

Speaking one day in the Assemblée Nationale at Versailles, where he was now the foremost figure, the sight of the mysterious black-gloved lady once again caught his eye. Her glance, it seemed to him, was softer, her countenance more smiling than in the days before the war. As on the previous occasion he sent her a note, but couched in more ardent and appealing words. This time she did not

tear it up, but placed it in her breast, perhaps, as Gambetta loved to fancy, next her heart.

At this time the great Tribune was thirty-four. Like most French students, he had amused himself with the fair sex in the Quartier Latin, but, till this unknown lady—apparently about twenty-five years old—came across his path, he had never been in love.

After the incident of the note he looked for her eagerly during the sittings of the Assemblée Nationale, but she came no more to Versailles, and he was almost in despair of ever meeting her when chance threw the couple together.

Going one day to call on a friend of his childhood who had been injured whilst hunting, Gambetta, to his surprise and delight, found, amongst other visitors, the mysterious lady who had so deeply stirred his emotions; his gaze met hers, and each read in the other's eyes the confession of a great love.

Having exchanged some of the usual commonplaces of society, the two contrived to leave the house together. Outside in the street, Gambetta eagerly asked, "Why did you tear up my letters? Did you not feel I was in earnest? Why have you been so silent all these years when you knew that I adored you?"

"Impossible," she replied. "You cannot love me! for I am unworthy of you, and one of those women whom nobody cares to marry—in a position partly caused by my own fault and partly by adverse fate. Before I let you speak of love I must tell you the story of my sad life. Listen to my words, and keep your heart intact till you know all. Far the best thing we can do is to part."

Gambetta, however, would not hear of anything of the sort, and her protestations that he would injure his reputation were she ever to come to his house, for such a friendship could never long remain secret, quite failed to alter his determination.

"I understand you," said he. "You want our friendship to be absolutely unknown to every one. Good, I consent. Meet me at Versailles, Wednesday next. There, at least, we shall be unobserved."

To this she consented, the compact being ratified by a clasp of her ungloved hand, which, following the mode practised by the "old noblesse," Gambetta gallantly kissed.

The lovers—for they may already be called by that name—now debated as to the exact place where they should meet, the lady finally selecting the spot where the two branches of the grand canal make a sort of cross. "Be at the foot of that cross," said she to Gambetta, "by the side of the Petit

Trianon, in the morning about eight o'clock; no one is about at that early hour. There I will tell you all."

On the appointed day, Gambetta was the first to be at the trysting-place in the beautiful park. No more suitable or romantic choice could have been made, for the Petit Trianon is close by, and in the shrubberies not far away the Cardinal de Rohan became involved in the affair of the diamond neck lace. Everything around is permeated with the rose-coloured, though indefinably pathetic, memories of a past age, when Versailles was so much associated with love.

Gambetta could not have helped being impressed with the peculiar fitness of the spot which the lady had chosen as a rendezvous. After a time she arrived, and burning with passion he rushed to meet her, murmuring "At last! at last!"

When, however, he saw her face he started back, for her eyes were red with weeping—as she proceeded to tell him, she had cried all the night before, thinking of the sad story she had to unfold. "What I have to say," added she, "is very torture to my soul, but as I want your esteem before your affection, if ever I am to deserve either, I must tell you the history of one who, since she first cast eyes upon you, has found new life in love."

Gambetta declared he would hear nothing, vowing that the past mattered not to him—his care was but for the present, and the future which lay ahead. The lady, however, declared she must speak, and overcome with emotion, her handkerchief pressed to her lips, murmured through her tears, "You must hear me! You must!"

When she was at length calm, Gambetta made her sit down on a stone bench, probably the resting-place of many a handsome couple in the days when Marie Antoinette amused herself at the Trianon close by. Putting his arm round her, gently, respectfully, as if she were a child he wanted to console, he soothed and comforted her as she unfolded her sad story.

Her name, she began, was Léonie Léon. This appellation, it is probable, was merely assumed. In any case the real one would seem never to have been disclosed, which is highly curious in a country like France, where papers of identification are essential for so many of the purposes of ordinary life.

The daughter of a Colonel, she and her sister had been well brought up, when the suicide of their father, owing to some question involving his honour, left the two girls penniless and forced them to go out as governesses. Her sister was the first to fall a victim to the snares, which, in France in particular,

sooner or later, are sure to entrap any young and pretty face without a protector in the world, and soon after the same fate had overtaken Léonie, who had come up to Paris in order to give lessons to a young lady related to one of the high officials of the Second Empire.

"Since that day," she mournfully continued, "life has seemed to be bereft of all sunshine and happiness, and my liberty is all I have to live for. As you will now realize, you cannot love me—Gambetta, the saviour of France's honour, can have nothing in common with one whom the world brands as a ruined girl. I have told my story; let us now part and forget we ever met."

This, as may easily be imagined in the case of such a passionate, ardent individual as the great Frenchman, was the very last thing he was prepared to contemplate for a moment.

Bursting out into a torrent of words, he rose to his feet as if addressing the Corps Legislatif. With that proud toss of the head so characteristic of a man once compared to a "lion at liberty," he denounced the cruelty of a world which sacrifices the greatest natures on the unnatural altar of human convention. He spoke of his life, into which an overpowering passion had never entered—of his loneliness and of his lack of real friends.

"Chance," said he, "has given us both an opportunity of ending our loveless liberty—it would be folly to spurn her gift. The misfortune of which you have spoken matters nothing to me. Let us both end leading solitary lives, and realize the paradise to which fate has pointed the path."

Smiling through her tears, Léonie Léon indicated that his eloquence had not failed to make an impression.

"In any case," said she, "we must both keep our liberty, for marriage between us is impossible. Nevertheless, I should like to be the guardian of your political honour, and of your heart, and when you wish to marry—which you must do some day—I will help you about it as does an old friend."

Solemnly taking her hands in his, Gambetta accepted her conditions, and the lovers, perhaps the truest who ever met in that old park, which has seen so many plight their troth, made a compact that their friendship should be concealed from all.

Before they parted, Gambetta was made to promise to be at the same spot and hour the next day.

"When I fixed our meeting-place," said his enchantress, "and asked you to come to the foot of the cross formed by the lake at Versailles, I must

tell you I was influenced by what you have been fond of calling 'religious superstition.' I am a devout Catholic. I believe. I want to explain all this to you, for I know you are going to Saint-Quentin, where you will speak on the separation of the Church from the State. Will you come back here to-morrow? I shall have more to tell you then."

Gambetta joyfully accepted, and covered her hands with kisses, murmuring "À demain, à demain!"

The morrow came, and Léonie Léon was at the appointed spot before Gambetta arrived.

The great Tribune was, if possible, more impassioned in his declarations of love than before, and, mindful of his enchantress's declaration that she was devout, denied that he was inimical to real religion. "Mere clericalism," said he, "is what I fight. My desire is liberty for all. I have, indeed, never advocated the oppression of any faith. Let us, therefore, ratify the compact we have already made—a prelude, I hope, to a more lasting union in the future?"

"Alas!" said she, "that in any case will be impossible. To a civil marriage, unblessed by the Church, I will never consent. My whole being revolts against it as against something completely repugnant. A marriage without God's sanction

would never efface my past; a marriage sanctified by Heaven can alone efface it."

"Be it so," said Gambetta, "but let me rely that with you I shall ever find a home. Let us then bind ourselves by a solemn pledge, surely as solemn as any religious ceremonial. Accept, dearest, this ring, which shall bind our hearts together," and he handed her a small golden circlet on which was inscribed: "Hors cet annel point n'est d'amour."

The compact was ratified by an embrace.

As Madame Léonie Léon had told Gambetta, she was a devout woman; indeed, at one time she had been lady president of the Guild of St. Vincent de Paul at Arras. She never took any serious step without consulting her confessor, apparently a worthy man. In reply to her earnest inquiries, this priest appears to have told her that the Catholic Church admitted two kinds of betrothal, the *sponsalia de præsente* and the *sponsalia de futuro.* "The Church," said he, "holds that 'betrothal by present vows' is equivalent, under unavoidable circumstances, to the sacrament of holy matrimony. It was a contract made between two persons declaring that henceforth they would live together as man and wife. The 'betrothal by future vows,' on the contrary, was only used when the man and woman

promised to marry each other at some future time."

The day after receiving Gambetta's ring in the Park of Versailles, she informed the good priest that she had betrothed herself "by present vows" to the lover whose name she had already let him know, and expressed the hope that he would never refuse her his blessing.

A liaison, which lasted till Gambetta's death, was soon firmly established, but, extraordinary as it may seem, Paris, a city ever avid of scandal, knew nothing of it. The agreement to leave friends and relations in ignorance of their attachment, and to live and love in freedom, was admirably kept. Thanks to the discretion of the two lovers, they met not by stealth, far from Paris in some mysterious corner, but at any time in a house in the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, where no attempts at concealment were made. Here Gambetta, whilst dining, would discuss with his mistress the great public men of Europe and the trend of political events, occasionally, after the manner of Frenchmen, consulting her as to what course of action he ought to take.

Of late years much has been said and written of the limitations imposed upon women which prevent them from taking an active part in the world. The real limitations are those imposed by their own

nature, which some few alone are able to surmount. One of these was Léonie Léon, who through the great man whom she inspired, wisely wielded a power which few kings have enjoyed.

Though she was never actually married to Gambetta, the latter regarded her as his wife; indeed, in some of the impassioned letters which he wrote to her, he calls her by that name. Never, perhaps, was there a closer union between man and woman than between these two beings, so widely different in everything but their capacity for great love. Their correspondence shows the sympathy which prevailed between them, and from it one divines the feminine influence which, from time to time, softened and restrained his ardent Southern nature. His fierce anti-clericalism, for instance, was moderated by his companion, and he abandoned the unrestrained and somewhat coarse abuse to which, owing to the associations of his early life, he was at first inclined.

The admirable portrait drawn by him of the country curé in his speech at Saint-Quentin, his expositions of the grandeur of a free Religion in a free State, were the first fruits of the influence of this prudent and ennobling friendship with Léonie Léon, and it is incontestable that, ever after the exchange of vows in the Park of Versailles, Gam-

betta, though by no means modifying his opinions, showed more caution in his relations with the Catholic Church, a caution no one would have suspected possible in the wild-speaking student of the Latin Quarter, or in the boisterous orator who hurled threatening denunciations against the Church of Rome.

In the zenith of his power, at Leo XIII's accession, Léonie Léon, it is said, was even sent by Gambetta on a secret mission to the Pope.

At the beginning of the great Tribune's career, he was considered by many to be merely a talented peasant escaped from the mountains of Périgord. As an orator of the cafés of the Latin Quarter, where his inflammatory speeches did much to prejudice the youth of the late sixties against the Second Empire, not a few serious thinkers had viewed him as a Bohemian revolutionary of a dangerous and uneducated type—a furious fool, who, should he ever succeed in obtaining the reins of power, would degrade that reputation for culture and refinement upon which France has always prided herself.

His liaison changed all this, and the grace, elegance and good taste of his mistress was of incalculable value in shaping his behaviour as a public man, as he himself recognized.

Writing to his love after the vote which estab-

lished the Republic on a firm basis in 1875, he said—

"Thou art ever my clear-sighted, steadfast counsellor; no matter how highly, no matter how deeply I analyse my life's circumstances, since fate united us, I see thee always inspiring my best deeds and wisely guiding my actions; I love thee as the Greeks must have once loved their household goddess Minerva.

"What faults hast thou not helped me to avoid! how often hast thou not put kind words into my mouth! what fits of impatience and anger hast thou not warded off! I bless thee in my heart for all thy good influence over me. How could I ever fail in my devotion to thee? Thou whom I know to be the very essence of my actions and the better part of my reason. To lessen my love to thee would be to disown myself, and to renounce everything which it is my desire to attain."

Again, in March 1878, at the time of the Conference of Berlin, he wrote—

"I lay down my arms before the wise Minerva; thy last words quite vanquished whatever hesitation still remained, and if they meet in Berlin under the Presidency of 'the Monster,'[1] I shall have to go, especially if the invitation comés from him. I spent

[1] Bismarck.

the evening with our Minister, and, on my return, I found this marvellous and decisive missive; I have made up my mind, and I am going to prepare my notes, in which I shall defend the love of action which thou hast so vigorously expressed. Those terrible words, cowardice and aggression, express everything, and I am going to prove to thee how right thou art."

In 1878, Gambetta wanted to purchase Balzac's old house, Les Jardies, at Ville d'Avray, near Paris. Never a rich man, however, he could not afford to pay the 120,000 francs which the proprietor demanded as its price, and so contented himself with a smaller villa which the great writer's secretary had once occupied. To this was attached a tiny garden, afterwards enlarged, and here, after his defeat at the elections of 1881, he retired to live with the woman he adored, who had at last consented to become his wife.

She would seem to have promised him that should he ever find himself hurled from power she would marry him, and that time having come she declared herself ready to keep her word.

The couple now busied themselves with setting their villa in order.

As his study Gambetta chose the only really big room on the first floor of the house, "a

mere gardener's shed shaken by the least puff of wind."

The little property is preserved, and forms a place of pilgrimage for admirers of the great Frenchman, whose name his countrymen should never forget; and here beneath a monument raised by men of Alsace and Lorraine—the lost provinces he strove so hard to save—is interred Gambetta's heart.

The house is much as it was in his day.

It is entered by a little door which has lately been restored. Immediately on the left hand is a low doorway leading to the old kitchen used by Balzac's gardener. A little farther on is a second door leading to a small room which served formerly as ante-room, dining-room, and drawing-room; quite at the other end a door opens on to the winding wooden staircase leading to the first and only floor. Above the dining-room is the bedroom. Opening on to the first-floor ante-room is another room leading to a dressing-room, once used as a store-room for seeds and plants in winter time. This was the room of the lady whom the statesman hoped to make his wife.

The miserable little villa was never healthy, as even a superficial examination shows. When Gambetta bought it a deep ditch filled with rain water, which trickles down from the surrounding

hills, was before the door, whilst the whole place was soaked through and through with damp. It is difficult to understand why such a habitation should have attracted his choice. With a small bit of land, it cost him 12,000 francs, and part of the little property had to be sold at his death to pay the balance of a small debt. Nevertheless, his opponents described him as luxuriating in a costly pleasure retreat, and said: "Behold his profits from the millions stolen during the war, or made in speculations with the money designed for the National Defence!"

In spite of the humble and uncomfortable nature of his retreat, Gambetta was delighted, for he looked forward to many pleasant summer days of wedded happiness. Everything connected with the little household was marked with the initials "L" and "G." For the lovers it was to be love in a cottage, that dream which many have dreamt, but few realized.

In November 1882 came the fatal accident. On Monday, the 27th of that month, Gambetta, who was fond of practising pistol shooting in his garden, went up-stairs just before lunch to fetch a new revolver, lately sent to him by the well-known gun-smith, Claudin.

French public men have always been fond of pistol practice, and since his duel with Fourton,

Gambetta, determined to make himself proficient, had collected quite a number of weapons, which were kept in proper order by a devoted old servant François Robelin—a *garde mobile* of the war—who, however, had just left to be married, his place being taken by a rather clumsy newcomer.

In his room Gambetta examined the gift. Preparing to load it, he found a bullet wedged in the barrel. In order to extract this, he most imprudently placed his right hand across the mouth of the barrel, while with the left he held up and pressed the butt-end hard, as a consequence of which the cartridge was discharged, the bullet first of all penetrating the palm of his right hand above the base of the thumb, and then running round emerged near the wrist on the outside of his arm.

The accident amounted to a mere flesh wound, no bones or arteries being hurt.

Hearing the noise of a pistol-shot, Léonie rushed into the room, but Gambetta, though bleeding freely, assured her that it was nothing, whilst explaining how the accident happened. With intelligence and presence of mind she attended to his wounded hand. Blood, however, continued to flow very freely, and doctors were sent for. The first to arrive were Doctor Gilles of the Brézin hospital, and Doctor Guerdat of Ville d'Avray, who pro-

ceeded to apply a slightly compressive dressing which stopped the bleeding.

Doctor Lannelongue came about one o'clock and examined and finished the dressing.

Gambetta himself regarded the wound as trifling, and laughed at his mistress for making so much fuss about a mere scratch, joking by saying that their wedding-ring would have to be slipped on to the hand wrapped up in bandages.

"Anyhow," said he; "the ring-finger is uninjured!" His health, however, which for some time past had not been good, made the accident more serious than it appeared to be at first sight, but this he did not realize. A short time later he began to receive visitors in his sick-room, a most unwise act. Meanwhile he continued to read the newspapers and letters sent to him from all corners of Europe. He took an interest in everything; and though his body was condemned to inaction, his mind was always at work. He commissioned Emmanuel Arène to speak to the President of the Council, Duclerc, on the subject of the Tonkin affairs, and to his friend Reinach he said: "I shall come back to the Chamber, and make a conciliatory speech."

The wound itself healed without complications, but after December 8th, when the invalid ate

rather freely at luncheon, alarming symptoms appeared.

The fact was that Gambetta was already worn-out before the accident, which merely precipitated a general breakdown in health.

Bismarck, an astute observer of men, had predicted this some time before. Speaking of the great Tribune, he said: "He is the only one among you who thinks of revenge, and who is any sort of a menace to Germany. But, fortunately, he won't last much longer. I am not speaking thoughtlessly. I know from secret reports what sort of a life your great man leads, and I know his habits. Why, his life is a life of continual overwork. He rests neither night nor day. All politicians who have led the same life have died young. To be able to serve one's country for a long time, a statesman must marry an ugly woman, have children like the rest of the world, and a country place or a house to oneself like any common peasant, where he can go and rest and nurse himself at times."

This was exactly what Gambetta did not do. An additional obstacle to his recovery was the confusion which reigned during his illness at Les Jardies, his general condition, it is said, being anything but improved by a multitude of doctors, personal friends, who were constantly at his bedside.

When abdominal trouble was indicated, a struggle began between Doctor Lannelongue, the surgeon who had been early in attendance, and other practitioners who declined to sanction an operation.

Meanwhile, the invalid continued to act imprudently; he walked about and even went for a drive on the 16th, the result of which was a cold, compelling him to retire to bed in great discomfort and with fever. As a matter of fact, he was suffering from appendicitis, which was then not known; Doctor Lannelongue, however, diagnosed his malady as being typhlitis, whilst laying stress on the necessity for an operation, in consequence of which his colleagues tried to send him away.

On December 1, 1882—a year to which he had always looked forward with apprehension—the great Tribune passed away. His last look, it is said, was for the friend of his youth, Eugéne Spiller—his last thought for Léonie Léon, a woman for whom life, in its real sense, was now over for ever.

When, for the last time, amidst a crowd of officials, she had kissed her beloved's forehead, Gambetta's love left Les Jardies just as poor as when she had first met him, for the thought of death had never entered his head, and there was no legacy—nothing but a scrap of paper found in his desk, on which was written—

"To the light of my soul,
To the star of my life,
To Léonie Léon
Sempre! Sempre!"

A little money in the pocket of her dress and the ring "Hors cet annel point n'est d'amour" were all the worldly possessions with which she was left to face the world.

Her relations were dead, and she was too proud to apply to Gambetta's family, who, it should be added, had accepted the idea of the projected marriage.

At first she thought of betaking herself to a convent at Suresnes, but changing her mind, she wandered to Paris, where, five days later, she was discovered in a poor garret by a friend of her dead lover. At last, owing to his entreaties and the intervention of relations of Gambetta, she was after a struggle induced to accept some modest means of existence.

For twenty years this noble woman, who had risen to the full duty of her sex and been the real helpmate and thoughtful adviser of the great Frenchman, lived on, waiting for the death which she believed would reunite her with the lover to whom she had brought happiness, inspiration and dignified refinement. By her own wish she was buried in the simplest manner possible, and the only memorial of Léonie Léon was the tiny cross which marked her grave.

X

Aurore Dupin, known as George Sand—Balzac's Description of her—Ancestry—Augustus the Strong—His Son, "Marshal Saxe" and his Daughter Aurore—Her Marriage—Disillusionment and Entry upon a Literary Career—Liaisons with Jules Sandeau and Prosper Mérimée—First Meeting with Alfred de Musset—The Saint Simonians acclaim George Sand as a Female Messiah—Her Just Estimate of their Creed—Voyage with Musset to Venice—The Poet's Illness, and Appearance of Pagallo—Irritation and Departure of Musset—Pagallo's Visit to Paris—Further Intrigues of the Authoress—Liszt and Chopin—Unflattering Opinion of Latter concerning George Sand—More Favourable View taken by Rosa Bonheur—Conclusion

BEFORE criticizing the extraordinary vagaries and unconventional habits of the famous French authoress, George Sand—maliciously called by Balzac, "a writer of the neuter gender, to whom nature might well have given more breeches and less style"—it is but just to recall the ancestry from which she sprang.

The most notable of these was a great-great-grandfather, whom she herself described as the most amazing debauchee of his epoch, which was certainly saying a good deal.

Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony, and

afterwards King of Poland—a man of such great physical strength as to be able to twist a horseshoe with ease—was, without doubt, very fond of women, whilst given to passing much of his time in revelry and war.

One of his many mistresses was a beautiful and high-spirited Swedish courtesan—Aurora von Königsmark, descended from a rough old Field-marshal, who, in the Thirty Years' War, had slashed and sacked and pillaged and plundered to his heart's content. The result of this liaison was Maurice de Saxe, better known as "Marshal Saxe," the victor of Fontenoy, a brave and clever commander, who lies beneath a splendid monument in Strasburg Cathedral.

Like so many of the soldiers of his day, Maurice de Saxe led a joyous and unrestrained life, taking with him to the wars a company of comedians, which, of course, included some pretty actresses, to whom on occasion he made love. One of these, Marie Rinteau, pleased him so much that she became his mistress. This girl, it may be added, had an extraordinary career of successful gallantry, fascinating many clever men, amongst whom were Colardeau and the poet La Harpe. Much of her amorous career, indeed, was passed in intellectual society.

By Marshal Saxe she had a daughter, Aurore, who, receiving an excellent education at the fashionable school of St. Cyr, was married when fifteen years old to an illegitimate son of Louis XV—the Comte de Horn. Fifteen years later, her husband being dead, she married a M. Dupin de Francueil, a man of culture, to whom Rousseau had once been secretary.

M. Dupin, though intellectual, was also extravagant, and when he died, his wife, having paid his debts, settled down to live quietly on an estate at Nohant, in the Department of Berry. By M. Dupin she had an only son, to whose education she now devoted all her time.

The career of arms appealed to this young man, and, having joined the army of Masséna as a private, he rose rapidly to be aide-de-camp to the dashing cavalry leader Murat, then taking part in the Italian campaign.

Following the custom to which allusion has previously been made, one of the French Generals had with him a very pretty grisette, Sophie Delaborde by name. This girl, who had the vivid manners and easy morals of a true daughter of the regiment, did not display any great devotion to her lover (by whom she had had a child), but, falling in love with Maurice Dupin, not only furtively lent

him the General's money, but, abandoning her protector, eloped with Maurice to Paris, where the couple were married in June 1804.

Long years after, their daughter, George Sand, who was ever outspoken, would tell of her mother's adventures as a camp-follower of the Army of Italy, describing all she had heard about the aged General and the captivating Captain—nor did she forget to refer to her own birth within a month of her parents' wedding-day.

Maurice's mother highly disapproved of the match as being a mésalliance, but the young people were happy enough and spent their time in enjoyment. About a month after the celebration of their nuptials they were at a party given to mark the bride's sister's betrothal—flowers decorated the rooms and fiddling and dancing were the order of the day. Of a sudden Madame Dupin said she felt ill, and was taken up-stairs. A short time after, her husband, who continued dancing, was astonished to hear his sister-in-law calling down the stairs to him, "Maurice, you have a daughter! She has been born in the midst of roses and music, and will be happy."

"She shall be called Aurore, after my mother, who will give her her blessing some day," exclaimed the happy father. Amandine Aurore Lucie Dupin,

as the little girl was baptised, grew up to be the gifted writer whom the world knows as "George Sand."

Though her son's marriage had provoked the strong disapproval of Madame Dupin, a reconciliation was eventually arranged, and after a few years, little Aurore was sent to spend a certain amount of time with her grandmother at Nohant. There she was brought into contact with an aristocratic circle, for the most part survivors of the *ancien régime*—a great contrast to her mother's friends, most of whom were imbued with the Revolutionary ideas. When the Allies entered Paris in 1814, Aurore remained with her grandmother for three years and led a thoroughly country life, whilst being educated in the old-fashioned way.

From 1817 to 1820 she completed her education at the Convent des Augustines Anglaises, at the end of which time she had some idea of becoming a nun, which so alarmed her grandmother, who held somewhat Voltairean views, that the girl was at once removed.

As a matter of fact, Aurore was not at all fitted to lead a convent life, and had she taken the veil would almost certainly have created a scandal. The blood of an amorous ancestry coursed through her veins, and from her earliest years she

had been prone to musings about love. She was, however, no sentimental maiden, languishing for some handsome gallant to appear. After being withdrawn from the Convent to Nohant she began to widen her mental horizon by much reading. Meanwhile her artistic temperament began to awaken, whilst poetry and music occupied much of her time.

In 1821, when Aurore was seventeen, her grandmother died, and the girl found herself entitled to some £20,000. Numerous suitors soon sought her hand, amongst them Casimir Dudevant, a full-blooded pleasure-seeker, whose nature was entirely out of accord with that of a clever and artistic woman.

Casimir was addicted to deep potations, and his wife's ideas, which he did not understand, seemed to him silly. Moreover, he grew avaricious, and grudged her the use of her own fortune, besides being addicted to low intrigues which occasioned much talk.

Under such circumstances, sooner or later a separation was inevitable, and the discovery in her husband's desk of a packet addressed to herself, and marked "Not to be opened until after my death," settled matters, for there his wife read nothing but maledictions on her perversity and contempt for her character.

Completely disillusioned as to any merits which she may have supposed her husband to possess, she immediately set out for Paris, leaving her boy and girl at Nohant. In Paris the Bohemian tendencies which had before lain latent in her breast burst out into flame, and taking up her residence in the Latin Quarter, she determined to adopt a literary career. She had introductions to several people likely to be of use, amongst them to M. de Kératry, the author of *Le Dernier des Beaumanoir*—this gentleman, however, gave the aspiring authoress but little help, merely advising her to make babies instead of books.

Latouche, of the *Figaro*, however, found her a place on the staff of his paper, and she wrote short stories, leaders, humorous paragraphs, at the scale rate of seven francs a column. With employment her resentment against her husband rather died away, and from time to time she went to Nohant to see her children. Meanwhile, freed from trammels which were galling to such an unrestrainable nature, she was supremely happy, going to all sorts of amusements, dressing herself like a man, and smoking long cigars.

Before very long she began to collaborate with a friend, Jules Sandeau, part of whose name she borrowed.

This young man, intent upon literary fame, was just seven years younger than Madame Dudevant. He had, however, been in Paris before her, was well acquainted with the Latin Quarter, and proud to serve as her guide.

Sandeau of course fell in love with his literary partner, who was then a sort of idealized *grisette*, with beautiful eyes, but more gifted intellectually than any *grisette* had ever been. The surroundings of the Latin Quarter, well accustomed to irregular unions, favoured such a liaison. According to George Sand herself, she resisted him for six months, when she yielded. For a season, broken by intervals in which Madame Dudevant revisited her home, the collaborators lived together. George Sand, in her *Autobiography*, speaking of this time merely remarks, "I lived in my apartment in an unconventional style."

The couple now helped each other with their work, and made each other happy. They wrote a novel together, and they wrote novels separately. This was the period of *Rose et Blanche*, of *Indiana*, of *Valentine*, etc., in which Madame Dudevant definitely assumed her new identity as George Sand.

Long after the lovers had parted Sandeau wrote lovingly of his former mistress's charms.

"Life," said he, "palpitating life, seemed to

move among the curls of her beautiful black hair; and there burnt as it were a hidden fire beneath her delicate and transparent skin. The purity of her brow indicated that the storms of passion had not yet broken upon that noble head; but the expression of her eyes, burning, yet weak and tired, spoke of terrible interior struggles, ceaseless but unavowed."

As to George Sand, her ardent nature was fully awakened, and she felt to the full all the intensity and joyousness of life as a Frenchwoman alone can feel them.

"To live!" wrote she. "How sweet it is and how good, in spite of annoyances, husbands, boredom, debts, relations, scandalmongers, sufferings, and irritations! To live! It is intoxicating! To love, and to be loved! It is happiness! It is heaven!"

She now began to write enthusiastically of illicit love, picturing it under the benevolent protection and patronage of the Divine Providence which overrules all things for good.

Meanwhile the lady prospered in literary ways, and Buloz, of the *Revue des deux Mondes*, gave her a retaining fee of £160 a year.

Her time was now divided between her lover's apartment and her husband's country house, and

notwithstanding the irregularity of her life, she did not neglect the education of her children—in her own mind she was convinced she was not doing wrong, only, as she said, having some of the liberty which her husband enjoyed. He for his part was quite satisfied, being allowed to do as he liked; in fact they agreed to differ, and corresponded amicably enough about the children and other matters. Dudevant, however, had no longer the least share of her heart, which remained in the Latin Quarter with her student lover.

Like millions of women before her, George Sand believed her dream would last for ever, but, arriving in Paris unexpectedly one day, she found Sandeau in the arms of a *blanchisseuse* who had caught his fancy.

His sensitive mistress refused to tolerate such behaviour, and would not listen to his protestations that the girl was nothing to him at all, and the affair merely a fleeting *amourette*. So the lovers parted, each destined to attain literary fame.

Jules Sandeau became an Academician—the first novelist to whom the Academy opened its doors.

It is said that, in that capacity, he voted against a proposal to award George Sand a literary prize. This, however, would seem to be nothing but

malicious story, as Sandeau appears not to have attended that particular sitting.

His heart was not broken, and he afterwards had other mistresses, including Marie Dorval the actress, George Sand's friend, who later broke the heart of Alfred de Vigny. The epilogue to the liaison between Madame Dudevant and Sandeau was, as described by M. Jules Claretie, singularly grim.

Long years after, in the editorial office of the *Revue des deux Mondes*, a bald little man, of military bearing and pensive manner, collided in the doorway with a fat lady with the dark complexion of a gipsy, and apologized to her politely.

"I beg your pardon, madame."

"I beg yours."

And then, when Sandeau had taken his seat—

"Who is that lady?" he asked.

"What?" was the answer. "It is you who ask that question! Why, that is George Sand!"

Before long George Sand again contracted a liaison, this time a brief one. Sainte-Beuve had introduced her to Prosper Mérimée, the novelist, and a close intimacy lasted for a week. She was lonely, and when she was not working time hung heavy on her hands. "On one of these days of ennui and desperation," wrote she, "I met a man who was free from all doubts and questionings—a

calm and a strong man—who understood nothing of my nature, and only laughed at my troubles. The force of his character completely fascinated me, and for a week I believed that I had acquired the secret of happiness—that he would teach it to me, and that his scornful disdain would heal me of my childish susceptibilities. I believed that he had suffered as I had suffered, and made himself master of his sensibilities. . . .

"This man, who would only be my lover on one condition, and who was able to make me desire his love, persuaded me that there might still exist for me a kind of love endurable to the senses and intoxicating to the soul. I had thought so myself once . . . and I was suffering from that romantic restlessness and weariness which make one giddy, and cause one to question all one's negations, and fall into fresh errors far graver than those one has forsworn. So, after having thought that years of intimacy could not link my existence to another's, I concluded that a fascination which had only lasted a few days might determine the course of my life. And, in the end, I did, at the age of thirty, what a girl of fifteen would have known better than to do. Courage! The rest of the story is odious to relate; but why should I fear to be ridiculous, if I have not been guilty?"

"The experiment failed completely. I shed tears of pain, disgust, and discouragement. Instead of an affection that could pity me and relieve me of my distress, I found only a bitter and mocking frivolity. That is all."

As a matter of fact, Mérimée and George Sand would never have got on together for long—she was a true Bohemian, whilst his tendencies were towards the official and fashionable worlds, as was afterwards shown, for he became a Government official—Inspector of Historical Monuments—and arranged the fêtes given at Compiègne during the Second Empire. Curiously enough, in later years he canvassed Jules Sandeau to vote for the Academy Prize of 20,000 francs being given to his former mistress, and voted with the minority himself.

After their honeymoon, Mérimée and his love of a week met only once again, at a dinner party given in Paris by Lord Houghton in 1848, when they stared at each other a good deal, but did not speak.

Only after her break with Mérimée did the authoress enter upon the really romantic episode of her life. This was the famous liaison with Alfred de Musset, who, when a youth of twenty-two, was introduced to her by Sainte-Beuve, perhaps by way of making amends for Mérimée, whose failings, she declared, had disgusted her with love.

Mindful that Sainte-Beuve had been responsible for this brief connection, George Sand wrote—"I would rather that you didn't bring Alfred de Musset to see me. He is too much of a dandy; we shouldn't suit each other: I was rather curious about him than interested. It is imprudent to gratify all one's curiosities, and better to follow the guidance of one's sympathies. Instead of him, I should like you to bring Dumas, in whose art I find soul as well as talent. He has said that he would like to meet me —you have only to give him my message."

The liaison between George Sand and Alfred de Musset is a most romantic love story of a quite peculiar kind, for both the hero and the heroine thoroughly realized its possibilities from a literary point of view, of which they were able to make good use.

So well was this understood that, according to one story, it was not Sainte-Beuve but Buloz who deliberately brought them together in the confident expectation that they would fall in love and would quarrel, and that their disputes would "make copy" for his *Revue*.

Be this as it may, it is certain, that since the day when Rousseau gave his *Confessions* to the public, no one to such a degree as they ever displayed the secret sorrows of the heart to public view. It

seemed indeed as if both had sacrificed themselves in order to obtain material for their books.

Their emotions, no doubt, were quite genuine and sincere, nevertheless they cannot be said to have been imbued with that spirit of reticence in which sensitive natures are wont to indulge. These literary lovers perhaps did well to lay bare the mental miseries which are the almost invariable concomitants of passionate love; it seems not improbable that they did so hoping to show the many who imagine that happiness accompanies romance the utter falsity of such impressions.

George Sand appears to have first been impressed by Musset, when she met him at a dinner given to the contributors of the *Revue des deux Mondes* in 1833.

She asked the young poet to call, and after two or three visits they were always together.

The courtship was, of course, tinged with literature. Musset praised *Indiana* in verses which he sent to its authoress. In another letter he declared that he must not ask for love, whilst friendship is too moral for him.

"May I not," writes he, "be a kind of comrade without importance and without rights—consequently without jealousies and without quarrels, capable of smoking your tobacco, and catching cold with you

while philosophizing under the shadows of all the chestnut trees of modern Europe?"

The youthful poet then began writing passionate love missives.

"If my name," pleaded he, "is written in a corner of your heart, do not efface the impression, however faint and feeble it may be. . . . There are days when I could kill myself. I weep instead, or laugh—but I do not laugh to-day. Good-bye, George. I love you with the love of a little child."

In a short time, the lady yielded, and Musset then burst into passionate verse—

"Eh bien! deux mots de toi m'ont fait le roi du monde.
Mets la main sur mon cœur, la blessure est profonde;
Élargis-la, bel ange, et qu'il en soit brisé!
Jamais amant aimé, mourant pour sa maîtresse,
N'a, dans les yeux plus noirs, bu la céleste ivresse,
Nul, sur un plus beau front ne t'a jamais baisé."

Very soon George Sand, to whom Sainte-Beuve acted as secular confessor, was informed by her of the liaison.

"I have fallen in love," wrote she, "very seriously this time, with Alfred de Musset. It is not a caprice, but a genuine attachment. . . . I have loved before—once for six years, and once for three years—and what I am capable of now I do not know. Many fancies have traversed my brain.

But my heart was not so worn out as I had feared. I say that because I feel it.

"I felt it also when I loved P[rosper] M[érimée]. He repelled me, and I had to make haste and recover. But now, instead of being pained and misunderstood, I find a candour, a loyalty, and a tenderness which cause me intoxicating delight. It is a young man's love and a comrade's friendship—something that I had never dreamt of and never expected to encounter—least of all from him. I denied this affection, at first, and repelled it, and refused it; but then I yielded, and I am happy through having done so."

A month later, when the liaison was firmly established, she wrote—

"I am happy, very happy. Every day finds me more attached to him; every day, the trifles that used to make me suffer vanish from my life; every day, the beautiful things of life that I used to admire shine for me more brilliantly."

The whole story of this love affair, it should be added, is to be found in the *Elle et Lui* of George Sand and the somewhat brutal reply, *Lui et Elle*, of Musset's brother Paul.

Just then Saint-Simonian ideas were exercising considerable influence on French thought: its adherents, who believed in social regeneration based

on the equality of man and woman, and were awaiting the coming of a female Messiah to bring such an ideal state of affairs about, for a time cast their eyes in the direction of George Sand as being likely fitted to occupy such a high position.

They sent her offerings of flowers and gifts in profusion, but on account of several reasons her connection with this fantastic sect did not last long. The novelty of its tenets seems to have attracted her for a time, and in company with Alfred de Musset she paid a visit to the monastery of the brethren at Menilmontant and admired the rather pretty costume of the Saint-Simonian monks, who wore sky-blue coats and white trousers, the name of each of the brethren being embroidered on his snowy waistcoat.

The tenets of the new religion, founded by the Comte de Saint-Simon but modified after his death in 1825, besides the abolition of private property included the equality of the sexes and free love, whilst children were not to be allowed to know who their own fathers might have been. Indeed, the Saint-Simonians proclaimed an entirely new order of things; many of them being intellectual dreamers who really thought they were about to regenerate humanity. Their philanthropic zeal won the praise of John Stuart Mill, who, with all the misdirected

enthusiasm of a philosopher quite ignorant of real life, declared that their efforts would entitle them to the grateful remembrance of future ages.

Père Enfantin, however—the high priest of the revised creed, went a little too fast for the old-fashioned prejudices of his own time. Determined strictly to adhere to the Saint-Simonian code, he refused, in the name of morality, to marry a young woman whom he had seduced under promise of marriage; at the same time he wrote to her mother that, "were he to enter upon a legal union, he might find himself in the unpleasant predicament of feeling it his duty to hand over his wife to some member of the brotherhood, who, stricken with grief, required the powerful diversion of being held in caressing arms."

No wonder that George Sand eventually summed up the whole creed as a system of Jesuitical metaphysics and sham morality in which no one really believed.

Meanwhile the liaison progressed, and Musset spent most of his time with his love, leading that Bohemian life which has so often been described—best of all, perhaps, by Henri Murger. It was a regular, or rather irregular honeymoon, and, like most honeymoons, it soon began to wane.

A journey to the South was insisted upon, and

the consent of Musset's mother to a voyage having with much difficulty and tears been obtained, the two lovers set out for Avignon, from whence they went on to Genoa, where they stayed a few days owing to the illness of the lady. Thence they went to Leghorn, Pisa, and at last arrived in Florence.

The travellers merely passed through Bologna and Ferrara on their way to Venice, which city they reached on January 19th, 1834. The very day of her arrival, George Sand took to her bed, having been unwell since leaving Genoa.

A week later, however, she told a friend that she was "well, both physically and morally"—but presently she fell ill again for five days, with dysentery, writing to her correspondent Boucoiran that Musset was also ill. "We do not talk about it," she went on, "for we have in Paris a number of enemies who would rejoice and say: 'They went to Italy for pleasure, and they have got cholera! How delightful! They are ill.'"

About the middle of February Musset was seized with an attack which seems either to have been brain fever or delirium tremens. As is well known, the poet was very dissipated and intemperate, being particularly addicted to the deadly absinthe.

In any case, he became so violent that, during one period of this illness, two strong men could hardly

prevent him from running naked round the room, shouting, singing, and raving like a madman.

The situation, curiously enough, resembled that pictured in a brilliant chapter of George Sand's *Lélia*, in which the poet Stenio, spurned by the heroine, having intoxicated himself with a concoction of drugged wine, recites a sort of frenzied chant. (This is to be found in the first edition—1833—only, and is entitled "l'Innebbrioso.") The verses in question have generally been attributed to Musset, but there seems good reason for believing that they were the work of Joseph Delorme. Be this as it may, they were quite prophetical of Musset's predicament at Venice—

"Que le chypre embrasé, dans mes veines,
Effaçons de mon cœur les espérances vaines !
Et jusqu'au souvenir
Des jours évanouis, dont l'importune image,
Comme au fond d'un lac pur un ténébreux nuage,
Troublerait l'avenir.

"Oublions, oublions ! la suprême sagesse
Est d'ignorer les jours épargnés par l'ivresse,
Et de ne pas savoir
Si la veille était sobre, ou si de nos années
Les plus belles disparaissent fanées
Avant l'heure du soir.

"Qu'on m'apporte un flacon, que ma coupe remplie
Déborde, et que ma lèvre, en plongeant dans la lie
De ce flot radieux,

S'altère et se dessèche, et redemande encore
Une chaleur nouvelle à ce vin qui dévore
Et qui m'égale aux dieux!

"Sur mes yeux éblouis qu'un voile épais descende!
Que ce flambeau confus pâlisse! et que j'entende,
Au milieu de la nuit,
Le choc retentissant de vos coupes heurtées
Comme sur l'Océan les vagues agitées
Par le vent qui s'enfuit! . . ."

Though frenzy and intoxication can be rendered artistically attractive in poetry, in real life they are supremely unpleasant, and Musset soon got into a dreadful condition.

Very much alarmed, George Sand sent for a doctor, who only arrived late in the afternoon when they were ringing the Angelus at the churches. Even when he did arrive he proved of but little use. His name was Rebizzo (or Berizzo), and, eighty years old, he wore a wig once black, but grown rusty with age and typical of the man. After having examined the patient, it was decided to bleed him, but the old doctor, who was nearly blind, had the greatest difficulty in discovering the vein, and at last said that, as he might not find the right place, he preferred to abstain altogether from such an operation. He, however, promised to send a young colleague who would bleed the patient as much as the French "Signor" might wish. He went away, and soon

this practitioner, Pagello by name, was announced. All this happened at the Hôtel Danieli on the Esclavona Quay, where Musset and George Sand had taken a room.

It was not the first time that Dr. Pagello had met George Sand; some days before he had already attended her. Together they nursed the invalid with great devotion, and for eight days never left him. Musset himself always declared that he owed his life to Pagello's ability and George Sand's attentive care; nevertheless, it is none the less true that his mistress made love to his doctor while he was lying ill.

It must be remembered that George Sand was very attractive and famous, whilst Pagello was very young. One day, when the patient was better and could be left alone, George Sand asked Pagello to go for a walk with her, and for three hours they strolled on the Piazzo San Marco, and soon after a liaison had begun.

One night, George Sand, after having written three pages of poetic and inspired prose (which, I believe, have never been published), took an envelope without any address, put the poetic love declaration into it, and handed it to Dr. Pagello. As there was no address, he did not understand, or pretended not to understand what she meant, and

asked her to whom he was to give the letter. George Sand snatched the envelope from his hands, and wrote on it, "To the stupid Pagello." From that night the two were on very intimate terms.

Musset soon began to suspect what was happening, but for a time he was persuaded that certain suspicious signs which he had noticed were merely hallucinations connected with his illness. Later on, however, scenes began to occur between the poet and his mistress. One evening, seeing a light in her bedroom, which communicated with his own, he put on his dressing-gown and went in to her. She was writing a letter on her knees; and, as he entered, he saw her hide it in the bed. He accused her of writing to Pagello.

She flew into a terrible passion, and said that if he went on like that, he should never leave Venice. Musset asked her how she would prevent him. "By locking you up in a lunatic asylum," was her reply. This rather frightened the poet, who went away. He then heard George Sand first open and then close the window. She had evidently torn the letter up and thrown the fragments into the street. He went down-stairs to see; but George Sand was there before him, in her petticoat and shawl, searching for the lost scraps of paper. The poet laid his hand on her shoulder and spoke to her. Her

conduct, he said, proved to him that it was, indeed, to Pagello that she had written. Furious with rage, she retorted that he should not sleep in his bed that night—that she would have him arrested at once; she then ran out, he following as fast as possible. Reaching the Grand Canal, she jumped into a gondola, called to the gondolier to go to the Lido; but Musset had leapt into the gondola too, by her side, and they set off together. She did not open her mouth all the time they were on the water. Disembarking at the Lido, she again began to run, leaping from tomb to tomb in the Jewish Cemetery. He followed, leaping too. At last, the lady sat down on a tombstone, and began to cry in rage and annoyance. "If I were you," said Musset, "I would abandon an impossible undertaking. You will not succeed in getting to Pagello without me, or in getting me locked up as a lunatic. Confess now that you are guilty." "Well, yes, I am," she answered. And then she acknowledged herself defeated, and her lover brought her back to the house.

Musset now proposed to challenge Pagello to a duel, but was wisely dissuaded by a mutual friend of both. As a matter of fact, he was growing rather inclined to overlook what had occurred, when one day George Sand, who was at his bedside, said to

Pagello, "Doctor, do you think Alfred is strong enough to stand a shock?"

"I beg your pardon. What did you say?" was the reply.

"Very well. I am going to speak frankly. My dear Alfred, I am no longer your mistress. I can only be your friend. I love Dr. Pagello."

For a time, weak and ill, the poet stayed in Venice in a miserable condition. It must be remembered that Pagello and his mistress had saved his life; nevertheless, at last he could stand it no longer, and towards the end of March, George Sand saw him off. She even travelled a little distance with him, and gave him as a keepsake a pocket-book and diary, with autograph dedications from both Pagello and herself.

Having crossed the Simplon, he wrote to her from Geneva, a strange and pathetic letter which shows him still in love, still taking all the blame for the rupture, still acquiescing in his punishment for his fault, and hypnotized, as it were, into abject humility.

After the departure of Musset, the lovers at once left the Hôtel Danieli, and took an apartment at San Fantino, in the centre of Venice.

Pagello's brother Robert lived under the same roof, and, as he was not easily carried away by

passion, he could not understand how Pagello could fall in love with George Sand, whom he considered unattractive, for the authoress was at this time very thin.

As soon as Pagello's father knew of the liaison, he forbade this brother to remain any longer with the couple. The life of the latter, meanwhile, was not spent in pleasure alone. George Sand worked, and worked hard. She only allowed herself one distraction—the cigarette; and even then she wrote while smoking. She smoked Oriental tobacco, and liked to roll her cigarettes and Pagello's as well. Perhaps she got inspiration from it, for she often broke off to follow the rings of smoke, sunk in reverie.

It was during her stay in Venice that she composed her *Lettres d'un Voyageur*, and also her novel, *Jacques*. Pagello gave very little assistance, and his collaboration consisted merely in supplying her with some information about the history of Venice and the customs of the country, but he often went with her to the reading-room and the Marciana Library.

She knew the language well, but not well enough to write in the Italian reviews; moreover, she never thought of writing in them. She had her work cut out to write the copy for the *Revue des deux Mondes*, for she sent her contributions regularly to M. Buloz.

She used to work six or eight hours running, preferably in the evening; generally she worked till very late at night; she wrote without stopping, and without making erasures.

When they left Venice they went to Verona, then to Lake Garda and Milan, and from there to Geneva. They stayed a very short time in these places, and reached Paris at the beginning of August.

On their arrival they separated, for Pagello would not on any consideration accept the hospitality offered him.

He went very little into literary society during his short stay in the Capital. The only literary men he remembered having seen were Gustave Planche and Buloz.

As for Musset, he often went to see him; Pagello was always received most courteously, but not at all cordially; at which one can hardly wonder.

In Paris Pagello remained for seven or eight months. Then, having broken off his connection with George Sand, being without money, and being recalled by his family and by his professional duties, he returned to Venice. From there he went to Belluno in 1837, and did not leave that town again, where he held the post of Head Doctor at the Civil Hospital, a post which on his retirement he left to

his son, Dr. Giusto. At Belluno he married, and had several sons; and but a few years ago, in spite of his ninety years, his intellect was perfectly lucid and calm, whilst he enjoyed excellent health.

Pietro Pagello was not only the least unhappy, but, whatever may be said, the most discreet, the most reasonable, the best-balanced of the three in an adventure from which, to all unprejudiced minds, he emerged the best.

As for Musset, it is probable that his affection for George Sand had never been as deep as he had imagined. In any case, within a year he was dangling after the famous singer, Madame Malibran, and writing poems to her, so as to let all the world know that he was in love once more.

George Sand, whose affections were not very durable also found consolation for the loss of these two lovers. She was on close terms of friendship with Liszt, of whom Alfred de Musset had at one time been jealous.

The last great emotional crisis in her life was her liaison with Chopin, whose affection she seems to have captured whilst he was lamenting the unfaithfulness of a Polish girl whom he had loved.

Their connection lasted eight years, and in the course of it they travelled to Minorca, where (as Musset had done at Venice), Chopin fell ill, "cough-

ing most gracefully," as George Sand said—but she did not always like the cough, for she wrote—

"Chopin is the most inconstant of men. There is nothing permanent about him but his cough."

At another time, she broke out into a sort of frenzy with: "Chopin is nothing but a detestable invalid."

In 1847 George Sand and Chopin parted, and the latter expressed a very unflattering opinion of the famous writer.

"I have never," said he, "cursed any one, but now I am so weary of life that I am near cursing her. Yet she suffers too, and more, because she grows older as she grows more wicked."

Many others, however, took a different view, amongst them Rosa Bonheur—that instance of valiant feminine talent who by her own virile and well-trained efforts attained an exceptional place in art akin to that reached by George Sand in letters—regarded the latter with a feeling approaching veneration. She denied that there was anything immoral about her works, and summed up her favourite authoress as having been too womanly and too kind.

According to Rosa Bonheur George Sand had dropped the treasure of her soul on the dung-heap where cocks, finding the pearls, swallowed what they were unable to digest. Particularly did the great

animal painter applaud a dictum of her favourite writer—

"Art for Art's sake is a vain expression. But Art for the truth, Art for the beautiful and the good—that is the religion I ask for."

INDEX

ABÉLARD, 3
Albemarle, Lord, 97
Alexander, Emperor, 32, 33, 50
Alexander the Great, 15, 76
Antoinette, Marie, 93, 94, 203
Antony, 76
Arène, Emmanuel, 313
Armour, Jean, 257
Arnold, Matthew, 255
Augustus, Stanislas, 112
Augustus the Strong, 317
Austria, Crown Prince of, 4
Austria, Emperor of, 4
Axford, Isaac, 95

"Bailiff's daughter of Islington," 6
Ballade de la Belle Heaulmière, 36
Balzac, 273, 274, 317
Barras, 142, 186
Beauharnais, Eugène, 185, 223
Beauharnais, Josephine, 186, 187, 188, 190, 191, 192, 194, 195, 198, 199, 200, 201, 203, 204, 220, 241
Bellard, M., 226
Bernadotte, 32
Beroaldo, 52
Bertrand, General, 225
Billard, M., 290
Billaud, Madame, 165, 167, 168
Billaud-Varenne, Maître, 162, 164, 166, 170
Birginska, Comtesse, 240
Blake, Kate, 280, 281
Blake, Mrs., 278, 279
Blake, William, 249, 276, 277, 279, 280, 281, 282
Blangini, 33
Blessington, Lady, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271
Bonaparte, Joseph, 191
Bonaparte, Louis, 205
Bonaparte, Lucien, 227
Bonheur, Rosa, 346
Bordeaux, Archbishop of, 53, 57
Borghèse, Pauline, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33
Borghèse, Prince, 29, 31, 34
Boucher, 127
Boulanger, General, 5
Bousquet, 31
Bracegirdle, Mrs., 83
Branicki, General, 112, 114, 115
Brown, Mary, 267
Buckingham, 88
Buffon, 127
Buloz, 325, 330, 343, 344
Burgoyne, Alan, 24
Burns, Robert, 257
Bussy-Rabutin, 80, 82
Byron, Lady, 254
Byron, Lord, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255

Cagliostro, 106
Campan, Madame, 189
Caroline, Lady, 254
Caroline, Queen, of Naples, 214
Carpenter, Lady Almeria, 101
Carrier, Jean Baptiste, 149, 150, 151, 152, 163
Casanova, Jacques, 106, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120, 121
Castiglione, Comtesse, 35
Cathol, Président-Général, 159
Charles II, 79
Charles, Lieutenant, 220
Charpentier, Gabrielle, 162
Chateaubriand, 251
Chènier, André, 159
Chopin, 289, 345, 346
Claretie, M. Jules, 327
Clarisse, 14
Clary, Désirée, 32, 184
Claudius, Emperor, 27
Clement, Mary, 97
Cleopatra, 76
Coire, Bishop of, 53, 54, 56, 57

Collet, 195
Colorno, Duchess of, 213
Compoint, Louise, 191
Corday, Charlotte, 154, 155, 156, 157
Coulmiers, M., 143
Cowper, William, 249
Creole, 196
Cugnati, 51

d'Annecy, Duc, 105
Danton, 160, 161, 163
Danton, Antoine, 162
Danton, Madame, 161, 162
D'Artagnan, 82, 109
d'Artois, Comte, 93
Daudet, Alphonse, 207, 248, 293
d'Audouins, Diane, 78
de Beaucourry, William, 38
de Beauharnais, Comte, 142
de Beaumont, Vicomte, 65, 70, 73
de Beaumont, Vicomtesse, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72
de Beauvais, Madame, 85
de Boissy, Marquis, 253
de Bretonne, 123
de Broissy, Mlle., 174, 175, 176
Debucourt, 275
de Cambefort, Anne, 79
de Canouville, M., 31, 32, 33
de Cernel, M. de Champion, 276
de Choisy, L'Abbé, 83
de Coigny, Mlle., 159
de Deffand, Marquise, 130
d'Egmont, Comte, 105
de Fervacques, Abesse, 175
de Fontanges, Mlle., 89, 90
de Genlis, Madame, 126, 127
de Grammont, 84
de Kératry, M., 323
Delaborde, Sophie, 319
de Launay, M., 132
de la Villirouët, Madame Victoire, 159, 160
de Ligne, Prince, 111
Delorme, Joseph, 337
de Maisonrouge, Marquis, 105
de Mancini, Olympe, 85
de Marcillac, Prince, 89
de Marcilly, Madame Giroult, 153
de Méricourt, Théroigne, 146, 147, 148
Demidoff, 225
de Miramion, Madame, 80, 81, 83
de Montbreton, M., 30
de Montespan, 88, 89, 90
de Montmorency, M., 62, 66
de Montreuil, Mlle. Louise, 125
de Montreuil, Mlle. Renée-Pélagie, 125
de Montrond, M., 29, 30, 31
de Morny, Duc, 206
de Musset, Alfred, 329, 330, 331, 334, 336, 337, 338, 339, 342, 347
de Noailles, Duchesse, 91, 92
de Permon, 30
de Polignac, Duchesse, 93
de Quérouaille, 79
de Rauchoup, M., 224
de Rousset, Mlle., 133, 134, 136
de Sade, Hughes, 124
de Sade, Jean, 124
de Sade, Marquis, 122, 123, 124, 125, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 139, 140, 141, 142, 144, 145, 146, 147
de Sade, Paul, 124
de Saxe, Maurice, 318
Desmoulins, Camille, 173
Desmoulins, Lucille, 171, 172
de Soissons, Comte, 85
Désorgues, 143
de Sousa, Madame, 206
de Staël, Madame, 183, 263, 264
de Toledo, Enrico, 51
de Vermandois, Comte, 87
de Villemarest, Maxime, 34
de Vinci, Leonardo, 76
d'Ollonne, Duchesse, 104
Don Juan, 28
Donne, 249
d'Ormesson, Olivier, 86
d'Orsay, Count, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 273
Dorval, Madame, 327
Doye, Angélique, 162
Doyen, 127
Draga, Queen of Servia, 103
Drouet, Juliette, 286, 288, 290, 291
Dudevant, Casimir, 322
Dudevant, Madame, 324
Dumas, Alexandre, 82, 272
Dumouriéz, General, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177
Dupin, Claud, 161, 319
Dupin, Madame, 220, 221
Duroc, Marshal, 205, 267

Edward III, 38
Elsler, Fanny, 217, 218

Erfurt, 32
Eugène, Prince of Savoy, 85
Eugénie, Empress, 103

Farmer, Captain, 266
Farmer, Mrs., 267
Féron, 77
Féronnière, La Belle, 77
Ferrara, Duke of, 64
Fersen, 93
Figaro, 110
Figuier, Thérèsa, 180
Fisher, Kitty, 108, 109
Flahaut, 205
Fleury, Cardinal, 91
Fouquier-Tinville, 124
Fourès, Madame, 221, 222, 223
Fournier, Abbé, 143
Fox, 107
Fragonard, 127
Francis I, 77
Francis, Sir Philip, 258, 259, 260, 261, 264
Frederick, Prince William, 102
Frederick-William of Prussia, 16

Gambetta, Léon, 285, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 316
Gardiner, Lady Harriet, 267
Gély, Louise, 160, 161
Gély, M., 160
George III, 95
George, Mlle., 227, 228, 229, 230
Gilles, Dr., 312
Girouard, M., 123
Girouard, Mlle., 123
Gloucester, Duke of, 100
Gluck, Chevalier, 127
Godwin, Mary, 256
Goethe, 251
Gompatchi, 7
Grafton, Duchess of, 102
Grand, Mr., 259, 260, 261
Grand, Mrs., 259, 260, 261, 262, 263
Gregory, 50
Grove, Miss Harriet, 256
Guerdat, Dr., 312
Guiccioli, Countess, 253
Guîsnes, 38
Guisto, Dr., 345
Gwynn, Nell, 79

Haly, Lord, 84
Hamilton, Lady, 23
Hanska, Madame, 273
Hébert, Madame, 171
Hébert, M., 171
Helen of Troy, 76
Héloise, 3
Henri IV, 78
Henri of Navarre, 78
Highland Mary, 257
Hill, Captain, 83
Hogg, Thomas, 256
Houghton, Lord, 329
Hugo, Madame, 289, 290
Hugo, Victor, 284, 285, 287, 288, 290, 291
Huntingtower, Lord, 98

Ile Adam, 62, 64, 65
Imperia, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56
Isabella, II, 102

Jablonowska, Princess, 240
Jehan, Shah, 7
Johnson, 166, 167
Johnson, Doctor, 10
Johnson, Madame, 167, 168
Joseph, Auguste Charles, 204
Juliet, 3
Julius II, Pope, 51
Junot, General, 191

Karr, Alphonse, 286
Keller, Rose, 128, 129
Kirkland, James, 16
Komurasaki, 7

La Borgnesse, Cateau, 86
La Chaise, Père, 4
L'Aiglon, 216
Laila, 6, 7
Lamartine, 155
Lamb, Right Hon. William, 253
Lamberty, 150, 151, 152
La Montespan, 87
Lancaster, John de, 38, 39
Langenois, 178
Lannelongue, Dr., 313, 315
La Normand, 151
La Pompadour, 92
La Vallière, Mlle. de, 86, 87, 88
Lebel, Madame, 117
Le Caron, 151
Leclerc, General, 28
Lecoq, 78
Le Fel, Mlle., 105

Leigh, Colonel George, 255
Leo IX, 50
Leo XIII, 307
Léon, Léonie, 300, 302, 303, 306, 315
Le Pelletier, 139
Lightfoot, Hannah, 95, 96
Linguet, M., 123
Louis XIV, 79, 80, 85, 86, 88, 90, 232
Louis XV, 319
Louis XVI, 17, 30, 123
Louis XVII, 94, 219
Louis XVIII, 266, 285
Louise, Marie, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 214, 215, 216, 217, 241, 242, 243
Lovelace, Lord, 254
Ludwig, Clara, 218
Ludwig II, 102
Luigi, Camillo Phillipo, 29
Lux, Adam, 155, 156, 157, 158

Malibran, Madame, 345
Manuel, 6, 7
Marat, 139, 153, 154, 157
Marc-Aurèle, 14
Marceau, General, 276
Marceau, Mlle., 276
Marcel, 111
Masséna, 33
Mathis, Madame, 28
Maurin, Colonel, 154
Mellet, Elizabeth, 84
Mérimée, Prosper, 327, 329
Milton, John, 249
Mohun, Lord, 83, 84
Molière, 240
Monneron, Louis, 261
Montaigne, 14, 19
Montespan, 80
Montez, Lola, 102
Moomtaz-i-Mahal, 7
Mountford, Mr., 83, 84
Mowis, 7
Murat, 317
Murger, Henri, 335

Napoleon I, 27, 28, 31, 34, 123, 142, 183, 185, 189, 190, 193, 194, 197, 201, 202, 203, 208, 210, 211, 215, 217, 219, 220, 221, 222, 224, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247
Napoleon III, 207, 230, 231, 271, 294
Narcissa, Pope's, 35
Narishkin, 225
Nelson, Lord, 23, 24
Nelson, Rev. William, 23
Nicholas II, 50

Orange, Prince of, 88
Orleans, Duchesse d', 85
Osiris, M. Daniel, 202

Pagello, Dr., 339, 340, 341, 342, 343 345
Pagello, Robert, 342
Pasquier, 27
Paul V, Pope, 29
Paulin, 225
Peyrusse, 225
Pius VII, Pope, 197
Planche, Gustave, 344
Plantamour, 261
Poniatowski, Prince Joseph, 234, 235
Portland, Duke of, 100
Potocka, Countess, 182
Pradier, M., 286
Prokesch, Count, 217

Quatorze, Louis, 80

Ragusa, Cardinal of, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60
Raphael, 50
Rauchoup, Madame, 225, 226
Récamier, Madame, 29, 263
Reichstadt, Duc de, 216, 217, 218, 219
Reitzenberg, Frau von, 218
Rennie, 97
Richelieu, Maréchal Duc de, 126
Rinteau, Marie, 318
Robespierre, 140, 152
Rochefoucauld, La, 10
Rochester, 84
Rochester, Countess of, 85
Romeo, 3
Rousseau, 18, 247, 330
Rudolph, Archduke, 4

Sadolito, Cardinal, 52
Sainte-Beuve, 329, 330
Sand, George, 317, 324, 325, 326, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 346
Sandeau, Jules, 323, 326, 327
Sanson, 155

Schwarzenberg, Prince, 212
Sergent, 275
Sergent, Madame, 276
Seymour, Lady Hugh, 102
Seymour, Lord Henry, 30
Shee, Mr., 260
Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 255, 256
Sophia, Princess, 102
Southey, Robert, 251
Spenser, Edmund, 249
Spiller, Eugéne, 315
St. Simon, 80
Stuart, Miss, 84

Talleyrand, 265
Tallien, Madame, 142
Talma, 33
Thalestris, 15
Thiébault, Baron, 31
Tinville, Fouquier, 140
Tophana, Signora, 72

Venus, 1
Villon, François, 10, 36, 37,
Voltaire, 107
Von Königsmark, Aurora, 318
Von Neipperg, Count, 212, 213, 216

Waldegrave, Countess, 102
Waldegrave, Earl of, 99
Waldegrave, Lady, 99, 100, 101
Walewska, Alexandre, 241, 242, 244
Walewska, Countess, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240
Walpole, Lord, 121
Walpole, Mary, 101
Walpole, Sir Edward, 97
Wellington, Duke of, 24, 231
Westbrook, Harriet, 256
Wheeler, Henry, 95
Whibley, Charles, 107
William, Frederick, of Prussia, 107
Wordsworth, William, 249
Württemberg, Duke of, 266

Yarmouth, Lady, 29

Zénobie, 14

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